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THE WRITINGS OF

LAFCADIO HEARN

Large-Paper Edition

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME XIV

Hearn's House from the Garden, Tōkyō

Hearn, Lafcadio

LIFE AND LETTERS

EDITED BY

ELIZABETH BISLAND

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME II

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LETTERS OF LAFCADIO HEARN

1887–September, 1895

LETTERS

1887–September, 1895

* * *

TO W. D. O'CONNOR

New Orleans, *February*, 1887

Dear O'Connor, — Please, if feeling free enough from other and more important labours, write to me, let me have a few lines from you — telling me how you are, and how the years pass.

With me they have been somewhat uneventful — except, indeed, that your wish to see me succeed with the Harpers has been realized: I have become a contributor to the "Magazine," and am going to have the honour of a short sketch of myself in it — of course, in connection with the New Southern Literary Movement. And I will also soon have the pleasure of sending you a new production, just got, or getting out by a Boston house — my "Chinese Ghosts"; brief studies in poetical prose, if you like. They may amuse you in a leisure moment.

I am going to run away to Florida, and perhaps the West Indies, for a romantic trip — a small literary bee in search of inspiring honey. There is a good market for books on Florida; and I may be able to get one out this next winter. You will like my sketch in "Harper's" when it appears, as it deals

with topics in which you are directly interested professionally — Gulf-coasts and shifting dunes, sands, winds and tides, storms, and valiant saving of life. I think I am beginning to learn how to do good work.

I trust you are feeling strong and hearty. Last time you wrote me you were quite ill.

How delightful it would be if you could take a trip with me in March, to the Floridian springs, to windy Key West, or to the palmier Antilles, where we might watch together the rose-blossoming of extraordinary sunrises, the conflagration of apocalyptic sunsets. Is it impossible? My dreams now are full of fantastic light — a Biblical light: and the World-Ghost, all blue, promises inspiration. Could we not celebrate the Blue Ghost's pentecost together?

Affectionately

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO W. D. O'CONNOR

NEW ORLEANS, *March*, 1887

DEAR O'CONNOR, — I was sincerely pained to hear of your illness; and reading your long, kind, affectionate letter, felt that I had, without intending it, strained your generosity by causing you to write so much while ill. Not that your letter was wanting in any of those splendid and unique qualities which, I think, make you unrivalled as a letter-writer; but that, having been once severely shocked by overwork myself, I am fully aware how much it costs to

write a long letter when the nervous system flags. In sending you this tiny book, I only desire to amuse you in leisure moments when you might feel inclined to read it; — don't think I want you to write me about it; for if you were to write again before you get quite strong you would pain me. . . .

I find I will have to go to the West Indies by way of New York; — at first I intended to go through lower Florida, and take a steamer at Key West for Havana. But I would have to change vessels so many times, I thought it best to get a New York steamer for Trinidad. In Trinidad I can see South American flora in all their splendour; in Jamaica and, especially, Martinique, I can get good chances to study those Creole types which are so closely allied to our own. I want to finish a tiny volume of notes of travel — Impressionist-work — always keeping to my dream of a *poetical prose*.

But I feel you will have to make some new departure in your own work at Washington: so terrible a mill as they have there for grinding minds, frightens me! I used to think Government positions were facile to fill, and exacted less than ordinary professions in private life. I see such is not the case; and I hope you will be prudent, and not return to the same exacting duties again — enemigo reconciliado, enemigo doblado. My own sad experience at journalistic work, which broke me down, did me great good: it rendered it out of the question ever to put myself in a similar situation, and instead

of the old loss of liberty I found leisure to study, to dream a little, to conceive an ambition which I now hope to fulfil in the course of a few years, if I live. Out of the misfortune, good came to me; and I notice that Nature is really very kind when we obey her; — she gives back more than she takes away, she lessens energies to increase mental powers of assimilation; she compels recognition, like the God of Job "who maketh silence in the high places," and after having taught us what we *cannot* do, then returns to us a hundredfold that which she first took away. This is just what she will do for you; and I even hope the day will come when you will feel quite glad that you did overwork yourself a little, because the result turned the splendid stream of your mind into a broader channel of daily action, not confined within boundaries of hewn stone, but shadowed by odorous woods, and swept by free winds, and changing under the pressure of the will-current.

I want you to feel full of cheer and faith in this dear Nature of ours, who is certain to make you strong and lucky — if you don't go back to that horrid brain-mill in the Capital.

I will write you a little while I am gone — if I can find a little strange bit of tropical colour to spread on the paper — like the fine jewel-dust of scintillant moth-wings.

Believe me, with sincerest wishes and regards,

Affectionately

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO H. E. KREHBIEL

TO H. E. KREHBIEL

NEW ORLEANS, 1887

DEAR KREHBIEL, — Your letter contained a cutting truth — "This is not a country to dream in; but to get rich or go to the poorhouse." Still, O golden-haired musician, is it not a crime to stifle the aspirations toward the beautiful which strive to burn upon the altar of every generous heart? Why not aim to kindle the holy fire, in spite of harsh realities and rains of Disappointment?

If you have written any pretty things recently let me see a copy soon as possible.

Don't forget me altogether. It will be best to address me at post-office.

A gentleman lent me a bundle of Creole music yesterday. I could not copy it; the writing was too funny; but he is going to have it copied in order to send it to you.

Very truly yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

Afterthought! — It has just occurred to me to ask if you are familiar with Lissajous' experiments. I know nothing about them except what I found in Flammarion's great "Astronomie Populaire." One extraordinary chapter on numbers gives diagrams of the vibrations of harmonics — showing their singular relation to the geometrical designs of crystal-formation; — and the chapter is aptly closed by

the Pythagorean quotation: Ἀεὶ ὁ Θεὸς γεωμετρεί— "God *geometrizes* everywhere." . . . I should imagine that the geometry of a fine opera would — were the vibrations outlined in similar fashion — offer a network of designs which for intricate beauty would double discount the arabesque of the Alhambra. I was reading in an article on Bizet not long ago that music has ceased to be an art and has become a *science* — in which event it must have a *mathematical* future! . . . Probably all this is old to you; but it produced such an impression upon me when I first saw it, that I believe its mention won't tire you anyhow. And then, between friends, it is a pleasure to exchange thoughts even of the most hyperbolical, and, perhaps, useless description.

L. H.

I send specimen music choral dance of Greek women in Megara. It is called "La Trata," and was first published in Bourgault-Ducoudray's "Souvenirs d'une mission musicale en Grèce"; — I took mine from "Mélusine." The dance is very peculiar, and is supposed to have been danced in antique times at the festival of Neptune or Poseidon. The women form a chain, by so interlacing their hands that across each woman's breast the hands of those on either side of her are clasped. The dancers move forward and retreat in file — as if pulling *nets*. Ancient tomb-paintings show it was known in early Roman times also; — might not the music be as

old as the dance — as old as Phidias anyhow? . . . I suppose this is absurd, but wish it was n't.

TO H. E. KREHBIEL

NEW ORLEANS, 1887

DEAR KREHBIEL, — Excuses for silence between us are, I fancy, recognized as unnecessary, since they always have a good cause. I read with admiration and pleasure the fine critiques you were kind enough to send me; and I verily believe that you will be recognized sooner or later, if you are not already, as the best musical critic in the United States. Of course, I'm talking now on a subject I know little about; yet, if there be any superior to you, I am sure it is only that, being much older than you, they may have had a generation longer of opportunities for study.

My little book is advancing; and I am now face to face with what I recognize as one of the most awful situations in life, the criticism of the proof-reader. I don't mean the commonplace proof-reader, who is a mere printer; but the terrible scholar who supervises proofs for a leading class of publishers, such as the man of the University or Riverside Press, who knows all rules of grammar, all laws of form, all the weaknesses of writers — and whose frightful suggestions are often simply crushing! What you have spent a month in making a beauty-blossom of style, may suddenly fade into worthless dust at one touch of his terrific pencil,

making the simple hook-mark "?" I can imagine I hear a voice asking: "Do you desire to make a fool of yourself by having this line in print?" And then the after-thoughts, the premature hurrying away of proofs, the frantic rush to the telegraph-office to have them returned or corrected, the humble letters of apology for trouble given, the yells of anguish in bed at night when I think to myself, "Oh! what a d——d ass I have been!" I have been now three times in front of this awful man, and like the angels he is without wrath and wholly without pity.

Your query about an opera-subject which suggested my lines about Rabyah, also inspired me to make the story a poetical sketch in my best style, which I sent to "Harper's Bazar"; and perhaps, when you read it, you will think again more favourably about the theme. I am going one of these days to make a study on the romance of Rabyah's courtship and marriage, which is very pretty in the rendering of the old Arabian chronicles. I understand exactly what you want; but not having any accurate idea of stage-necessities and theatrical exigencies, I fear you must always remain the one to determine the worth of any operatic suggestion possible to make. Now, for example, I can't understand why Rabyah's death could not be *mounted*, etc. You will like the *colour* of my sketch for the "Bazar," to which I gave the title of "Rabyah's Last Ride." I have adopted the Arabic names, in preference to Lyall's or Muir's, unpronounceable at

sight. — It seems to me that you can devise a splendid piece of gloomy beauty from the "Kalewala."

I am going to the West Indies as soon as my book is out. It will be a tiny 16mo, with Chinese figures.

Believe me always your warmest friend

LAFCADIO

I made a mistake in writing you about Hindola and Kabit; they represent poetical measures, or styles of chant, not instruments. See how my memory failed me.

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

NEW ORLEANS, 1887

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — More than two weeks before receiving your most welcome letter, I wrote to Messrs. Roberts Bros. of Boston to send you, as soon as published, a copy of "Chinese Ghosts," which will appear in a few weeks. It opens with the story of the Bell — the legend of the Great Bell of Pekin, or Pe-King; — and you will also find in it the "Legend of the Tea-Plant": both in better form than that which you first saw. . . . If you watch the "Harper's Bazar," you will find in it a little pre-Islamic story — "Rabyah's Last Ride" — which I expect will please you.

I am under so many obligations to you that I can't attempt to thank you seriatim; but I am especially grateful to you for the pleasure of knowing some-

thing of Mrs. Alice W. Rollins. All the nice little things you have written about me and said about me, I can only hope to thank you for *as I should like*, when I am better able to prove what I feel.

As for your criticism of my queer ways, I can only say in explanation that I suspected a slightly sarcastic tendency where I was no doubt mistaken, and simply beat retreat from an imaginary fire.

Anyhow, let me assure you no one has ever had a sincerer belief in, or a higher opinion of your abilities, or a profounder recognition of many uncommon qualities discerned in you — than myself. I trust you will soon receive the visit of the Ghosts: there are only six of them.

Very truly and gratefully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

NEW ORLEANS, *April 7 and* 14, 1887

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — Your delightful letter ought, I imagine, to have been answered before; but among literary brothers and sisters a little delay can always be comprehended and forgiven, even without explanation. The explanation, however, might be interesting to one who feels so generous a sympathy with my work. I am trying to find the Orient at home — to apply the same methods of poetical-prose treatment to modern local and living themes. The second attempt, in form of a novelette, is nearly ready. The subject of the whole is

one which you love as much as I — Louisiana Gulf-life.

Yes, indeed, I remember the Baboo! — with his prognathic profile, and his Yakshasa smile. I remember him especially, perhaps, because I first learned in his presence that your eyes were grey, instead of black. . . . I sent the Baboo to Krehbiel with a letter last summer; — taking care, however, to warn my friend against the ways of the Phansigars. Really the Baboo was an uncanny fellow; and the mysterious fact of his discharge from the British Civil Service impressed me as suspicious.

I think you are really lucky to be able to see and hear a Brahmin, and to find the East at your right hand. Atmans and mantras, and the skandhas, and the Days and Nights of Him with the unutterable name, and the mystic syllable Aum! Enough to suggest all the rest — light, warmth, sounds, and the splendour of nights in which fountain-jets of song do bubble up from the rich flood of flower-odours. . . . Perhaps I shall be able to see the Brahmin; — I hope to be in New York early in May. I do not know whether I shall behold *you;* — you will be there, as here, a blossom dangerous to approach by reason of the unspeakable multitude of bees!

I have always wondered at your pluck in going boldly into the mouth of that most merciless of all monsters — a Metropolis of the first dimension — and at your success in the face of very serious diffi-

culties of the competitive sort. Let me hope you will feel always confident, as I do, that you are going to do more. You have one very remarkable and powerful faculty — that of creating an impression, that remains, with a very few words. It shows itself in little things — for example, your few lines about the composite photos. Do you still write verse? A little volume of poetry by you is something I hope to see one of these days. The only thing I used to be afraid of regarding you was that you might lack the rare yet terribly necessary gift of waiting. And yet, there is something very unique in your literary temperament; — you are able to reach an effect at once and directly which others would obtain only by long effort. If you like anything I have done, it is because I have taken horrible pains with it. Eight months' work on one sketch; — then eight months on another — not yet finished; but happily one hundred and twenty pages are done; and the first was only seventy-five. The attempt at romantic work on modern themes taught me lots of things. One is, that the purpose, as well as the thought, must evolve itself, but the thought must come first; — then the thing begins to develop — and always in a different way from that at first intended. Also I found that the importance of noting down *impressions*, introspective or otherwise — and expanding them at leisure, is simply enormous. Perhaps you know all this already; — if not, try it and get a pretty surprise.

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

I have one thing more to chat about; — I am trying to get all my friends to read Herbert Spencer — beginning with "First Principles." Slow reading, but invaluable; systematizes all one's knowledge and plans and ideas. I've made three converts. The only way to read him is by paragraphs — all of which are numbered. I am now wrestling with the two big volumes of "Biology," and have digested one of the "Sociology." The "Psychology" I will touch last, though it is his mightiest work. Four years' study, at least, for me to complete the reading. But "First Principles" contain the digest of all; — the other volumes are merely corollaries. When one has read Spencer, one has digested the most nutritious portion of all human knowledge. Also the style is worth the labour — puissant, compact, and melodious.

Believe me always with many thanks for kind letter,

Your friend and literary brother

LAFCADIO HEARN

Twice commenced, it is time this rambling document should finish. But I forgot to tell you C. D. Warner is here — stops at No. 13 Rampart. He called once at my rooms, seated himself among the papers, dust, bad pictures, and general desolation; and went away, leaving his card upon the valise (long-extemporized into a desk). I did not see him! He never called again.

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

NEW ORLEANS, *April*, 1887

DEAR SIR, — However pleasant may have been the impulse prompting your generous letter, I doubt whether you could fully comprehend the value of it to myself — the value of literary encouragement from an evidently strong source. There is nothing an author or an artist needs so much — nothing that is more difficult to obtain.

After all, the reward for him who strives to express beauty or truth, for its own sake, is just such a letter as yours; for his aim is only to reach and touch that kindred *something* in another which the Christian calls Soul — the Pantheist, God — the philosopher, the Unknowable.

Your wish as to the application to modern themes of the same literary methods is about to be accomplished.

I do not know how the work will be received by the public, nor can I tell just when it will appear; but I *think* soon, and in "Harper's Magazine" (entre nous!).

If it appears subsequently (or immediately) in more enduring form, I shall show my gratefulness by sending you a copy.

Believe me, very sincerely

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

NEW ORLEANS, *April*, 1887

DEAR MR. GOULD, — You could not have done me more pleasure than by sending me your pamphlet on the "Colour-Sense." I am an Evolutionist, and as thorough a disciple of Spencer as it is possible for one not a practical scientist to be; and such studies, combined with art and poetry, with which they serve in my case to stimulate and illustrate and expand, are my delight. I like your criticism on Grant Allen, too. In his "Physiological Æsthetics," as well as in "Common-Sense in Science" and various other volumes, he has occasionally made singularly wild divergences from the perfectly smooth path he professes to travel — tumbled into imaginative thickets, lost himself in romantic groves. Still he is, as you observe, more than interesting sometimes; delightful, suggestive, skilled in giving a charming homeliness and familiarity to new truths vast as the sky.

The pamphlet on retinal insensibility I have not yet read through; and I fear some parts of it will prove too technical for me. But its larger conclusions and elucidations impress me already sufficiently to tell me that a more complete grasp of it will more than please and surprise.

My novelette is complete and in a publisher's hands. When you read the first part, whether in the "Magazine" or in book form — I think you will

find much of what you have said regarding the æsthetic Symbolism of Colour therein expressed, intuitively — especially regarding the holiness of the sky-colour — the divinity of Blue. Blue is the World-Soul.

With grateful regards

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

NEW ORLEANS, 1887

DEAR MR. GOULD, — Reading your letter, I was strongly impressed by the similarity in thought, inspiration, range, even chirography, with the letters of a very dear friend, almost a brother, and also a physician — though probably less mature than you in many ways. A greater psychological resemblance I have never observed. My friend is very young but already somewhat eminent here; — he has been demonstrator of anatomy for some years at our University, and will ultimately, I am sure, turn out a great name in American medicine. But he is a Spaniard — Rodolfo Matas. I first felt really curious about him after having visited him to obtain some material for a fantastic anatomical dream-sketch, and asked where I could find good information regarding the lives and legends of the great Arabian physicians. When he ran off a long string of names, giving the specialties of each man, and criticizing his work, I was considerably surprised; and even felt a little skeptical until I got hold of

Leclerc and Sprengel and found the facts there as given to me by word of mouth. I trust you will meet him some day, and find in him an ideal confrère, which I am sure he would find in you. It is a singular fact that most of my tried friends have been physicians.

You asked me about Gautier. I have read and possess nearly all his works; and before I was really mature enough for such an undertaking I translated his six most remarkable short stories: ("Une Nuit de Cléopâtre"; "La Morte Amoureuse"; "Arria Marcella"; "Le Pied de Momie"; "Le Roi Candaule"; and "Omphale"), which were published by R. Worthington under the title of the opening story — "One of Cleopatra's Nights." The work contains, I regret to say, several shocking errors; and the publisher refused me the right to correct the plates. The book remains one of the sins of my literary youth; but I am sure my judgment of the value of the stories was correct, and if ever able I shall try to get out a new and correct edition. Of Sainte-Beuve I have read very little — found him silver-grey. Most of the Romantic school I have. If you like Gautier, how much more would you like the work of Julien Viaud (Pierre Loti). We know each other by letter. Read "Le Roman d'un Spahi" first; I think it will astonish you. Then "Le Mariage de Loti"; then "Fleurs d'Ennui." All his work, which has already won, even for so young a man, the highest encomium of the Açademy, and the

Vitel prize, is extraordinary; but my dislike of grey skies, fogs and ice, causes me to find less pleasure in "Mon Frère Yves," and "Pêcheur d'Islande," though there are superb tropical pages scattered through the latter.

I send you a little Arabian story, which I wrote for "Harper's Bazar" last winter, and which I will reproduce some day in another shape, if I live to complete my Arabian plan. Perhaps you are familiar with the legend.

You will be glad to hear my novelette has been purchased by the "Magazine." So that I may ultimately hope to be able to leave journalism alone. It is not arduous work for me; but I am a thorough demophobe, and it compels me to meet many disagreeable experiences — experiences which often result in absolute nervous prostration caused wholly by annoyance. You can imagine the difficulties of creating artistic things only in the intervals of a long succession of petty troubles. Such troubles would be absurd to most minds, but to me they are horribly serious: I have a badly-balanced nervous make-up.

Next week I go away to hunt up some tropical or semi-tropical impressions. The "Atlantic" has given me some attention, and I am going to try to make a sketch for them.

Yours must be a very remarkable mind: I was greatly impressed by the plan and purpose and admirable instructive excellence of that optic model

you sent me the circular of. In fact, I feel very small when I compare the work of my fancy with the work of such knowledge as yours. Still I have the power to give you pleasure, which is quite a consolation.

Believe me truly, your friend

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. Are you inclined to believe in a further evolution of the colour-sense? Spencer, in Vol. II, "Biology," is rather conservative as to the further prospects of *physical evolution*, although I suppose further moral evolution must necessitate a further progress in the nervous system.

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

NEW ORLEANS, 1887

IN reply to nearly all the questions about my near-sightedness, I might answer, "Yes." Had the best advice in London. Observed all the rules you suggest. Glasses strain the eye too much — part of retina is gone. Other eye destroyed by a blow at college; or rather by inflammation consequent upon blow. Can tell you more about myself when I see you, but the result will be more curious than pleasing. Myopia is not aggravating.

I knew you were going to have thorough success; — you will do far better than you think. Wish I had the opportunity to study medicine, or rather, the ability to be a good physician. Ah! to have a

profession is to be rich, to have international current-money, a gold that is cosmopolitan, passes everywhere. Then I think I would never settle down in any place; would visit all, wander about as long as I could. There is such a delightful pleasantness about the *first* relations with people in strange places — before you have made any rival, excited any ill will, incurred anybody's displeasure. Stay long enough in any one place and the illusion is over: you have to sift this society through the meshes of your nerves, and find perhaps one good friendship too large to pass through. To be a physician, an architect, an engineer — anything that makes one capable of supplying to a universal or cosmopolitan want, is a great capital. Next to this, a good tradesman is worthy of envy: he may feel as much at home in Valparaiso as in New York; in Bangkok as in Paris.

Apropos of a medical novel, again — have you had occasion to remark the fact that among the French, every startling discovery in medicine or those sciences akin to medicine, is almost immediately popularized by a capital story? The best of those I have seen appeared in the "Revue Politique et Littéraire" and in the "Revue des Deux Mondes." The evolution of electricity by the human body suggested a powerful but very Frenchy sketch in the former some years ago, which appeared concomitantly with those theatrical exhibitions of a famous "electrical woman." Then there was one

dealing with the super-refinement of the five senses, particularly vision and smell — entitled "Un Fou." The researches of Charcot and others into hypnotism and its phenomena, doubtless suggested "Une Tresse Blonde" in the "Revue des Deux Mondes."

It is always a safe and encouraging thing to trace one's ancestral history, supposing one be very philosophical. In your case it is. A fine physical and mental man can feel sure from the mere fact of his comparative superiority that he has something to thank his ancestors for. But suppose the man be small, puny, sickly, scrofulous — the question of ancestry becomes unpleasant. We are far ahead of Tristram Shandy, nowadays; the inferiority of the homunculus is no mere matter of accident or interruption. How depressing some knowledge is, and how little philosophy betters the situation some discoveries bring about. Take such an example as this: a nice, sweet girl, full of physical attractiveness, grace, freshness, with a delicious disposition, fascinates you, you think of marriage. Somebody tells you the mother and grandmother both went mad. How much of a change in your admiration is produced by this simple fact. I saw this feeling put into practice. A Southern planter — splendid man! — was asked for his daughter's hand by a gentleman of the neighbourhood, whose grandfather had committed a terrible crime. The young man was wealthy, accomplished, steady, brave, had the best of reputations and was liked by the girl. The father

refused him frankly for the simple reason that he had in his veins some of the blood of a great criminal.

It must have struck you, if you have studied Buddhism (not "esoteric Buddhism," which is damnable charlatanism!) how the tenets of that great faith are convertible into scientific truths in the transforming crucible of the new philosophy. The consequence of the crime or the sacrifice in the forming of the future personality; the heights attainable by discipline, of indifference to external things; the duty and holiness of the extinction of the *Self;* the monstrous allegory of the physical metempsychosis, which is the shadow of a tremendous truth; the supreme Buddha-hood which is the melting into the infinite life, light, knowledge, and the peace of the immensities: science gives an harmonious commentary upon all these, which it refuses to the more barbarous faith of the Occident. All that is noble in the Christianity, too much boasted of, belongs also to the older and vaster dream of the East — is perchance a dim reflection of it; the possibility of the invasion of the Oriental philosophy into the Occident seems to me worthy of consideration. In the meanwhile, it is unfortunate that such apes as the —— should parade their detestable macaqueries as Buddhism and obtain such hosts of hearers.

Speaking of the sexual sense being "such an infernal liar," there are reasons that lead me to doubt whether it is *all* a liar. I think it never tells a *physical* lie. It only tells an ethical one. The physical

memory of the most worthless woman that ever ensnared a man vibrates always afterward with a thrill of pleasure. But that is not really what I intended to say: I want to know if there be any scientific explanation of this fact. A woman wicked enough to tempt a man to cut his mother's throat, *may* have a peculiar physical magnetism. The touch of her hand in passing, the character of a look from her — although she be ugly — may be irresistible, damning. A good woman, beautiful, graceful, infinitely her physical superior, may have no such charm for the same man. Here is a mystery I cannot explain. This phenomenon is especially noticeable in the tropics, where differences of race and race mixture produce astounding sexual variations. Never was there a huger stupidity than the observation that "all women are in one respect alike." On the contrary, in that one respect they differ infinitely, inexplicably, diabolically, fantastically.

L. H.

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

NEW ORLEANS, 1887

DEAR MR. GOULD, — I posted a letter, thanking you for two treatises so kindly sent, just before receiving your note. Be sure that I will find it no small pleasure to have a chat with a brother-thinker, if I find myself in Philadelphia this summer.

To the best of my recollection the book you speak of is a small, thin volume which only pretends to

be a synopsis of the most gigantic of existing epics — the Mahabharata excepted. There are three complete translations of the colossal Ramayana: — The Italian version of Gorresio, I think in ten volumes; the French prose one by Hippolyte Fauche in nine, which I have read; and the exceedingly tiresome English translation (now O. P.) by Griffith, in Popish verse. It was, I think, on this last that "The Iliad of the East" was based — a very poor effort, artistically.

These epics are simply inexhaustible mines of folk-lore and legend — like the Kathā-sarit-Sāgara. But one gets cloyed soon. It requires the patience of a Talmudist to work in these huge masses to get out a diamond or two. But diamonds there are. You know that mighty pantheistic hymn, the "Bhagavad-Gita," is but a little fragment of the Mahabharata; — also the story of Nala, so beautifully translated by Monier Williams, Arnold, and the wonderful dead Hindoo girl, Toru Dutt, who wrote English and French as well as Hindustani and Sanscrit, made also some exquisite renderings. All you could wish for in this direction has not indeed been done; but it will take a hundred years to do it.

I am only a dilettante, not a linguist; and I only try to familiarize myself with the aspect of a national Idea as manifested in these epics. Some day I shall try to offer the public a little volume dealing with the Old Arabic spirit — pre-Islamic and post-

Islamic. The poetry of the desert is Homeric. And I don't know but that for pure *natural* poetry, the great Finnish Kalewala is not more wonderful than the Indian epics. When I made my brief renderings from the French edition of 1845, I was not familiar with the completion of the work by the labours of Loennrot.

Pardon long letter. You and I may have a good chance to talk these things over later on.

Very cordially yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

NEW ORLEANS, 1887

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — At the time your letter reached me, the few proofs sent had been given away; — I have not many friends, of course, but I did not have many proofs either. The best I can therefore do is to send original photo. This is taking a liberty, I suppose, to send what was n't asked for; but it is the best I can do, and you can pitch it away if you don't want it.

My novelette is done, and I am waiting to hear of its fate before starting. I am sure you will like it, and recognize a good deal of the scenery. I do not know how long I shall stay in New York; — I might only stay a very short time, but quite long enough to see you once — for a little while. Then again I might take a notion to stay in the North — don't really know what I shall do.

What would be nice, if one could manage it, would be to live in the country, or in some vast wilderness, and ship one's work away. But I fear that will only be possible when I have become Ancient as the Moon — if I should ever become ancient.

Very truly

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. I met no more Hindoos here, but I met some other singular beings.

My last pet was a Chinese doctor, whose name I cannot pronounce. He tried to teach me Chinese; but I discovered nasal tones almost impossible to imitate — snarling sounds like the malevolent outcries of contending cats. . . . "Gha! — ho-lha! Koum Yada! Gha! ghwang hwa! — yow sum!" Under the placid naïveté of a baby, my Chinese tutor concealed a marvellous comprehension of human motives and of human meannesses. He observed like a judge, and smiled always — always, with the eternal, half-compassionate, half-divine smile of the images of Fo.

TO H. E. KREHBIEL

NEW ORLEANS, 1887

DEAR KREHBIEL, — All that is now delaying me is news from the Harpers which I am waiting for. I have sent on my complete novelette — an attempt at treatment of modern Southern life in the same

spirit of philosophic romance as the "Ghosts" attempted to exemplify — an effort to reach that something in the reader which they call Soul, God, or the Unknowable, according as the thought harmonizes with Christian, Pantheistic, or Spencerian ideas, without conflicting with any. Of course, I am a little anxious over this parturition; — have no idea how it is going to impress Alden. In a week from this date I expect to hear from him. Then I will be able to go.

Of course, New York is a horrible nightmare to me. I have been a demophobe for years — dread crowds and hate unsympathetic characters most unspeakably. I have only been once to a theatre in New Orleans; — to hear Patti sing, and I got out after she had sung one song. I can't be much of a pleasure to any one. Here I visit a few friends steadily for a couple of months; — then disappear for six. Can't help it; — just a nervous condition that renders effort unpleasant. So I shall want to be very well hidden away in New York — to see no one except you and Joe. There are one or two I shall have to visit; but I shall take care to make those visits just before leaving town.

Your suggestion about the catalogue was so kind, that I don't know how to thank you. What bothers me about it are the following points:

1. If the collection is a large one, seems to me that each department should be entrusted to a specialist. Japanese armourers-work alone demands that.

You know what Damascus-steel means in literary and scientific research; and the Japanese artisans surpassed the world in such work. Then porcelains, lacquers, inlaid work, pictured books, goldsmithery, etc. I know nothing about these things.

2. The Japanese expert may have simply confined himself to titles, dates, names; — or have made explanatory text as fitting and dry as possible. If he has, I don't see how a *unique* catalogue could be made. The only way it could be made, I imagine, would be to make explanatory text picturesque and rich in anecdote; which would require immense reading, and purchase of many expensive books on the subject of art and history — De Rosny, Gonse, Metchnikoff, etc. Oriental art is one of the things I can never afford to study. It costs too much — the luxury of a rich dilettante.

3. Seems to me such a work would require at least six months to do at all, a whole year to do well. Don't think I could afford to do it. I cannot write or read at night. If it were simply a question of translation and arrangement, it would be done soon; and I would need only a few technical and art treatises, some of which I already have. . . .

I need rest and change a while — not that I feel sick, but the continual fight with malaria leaves a fellow's nerves terribly slack, like the overstrained chords of a — well, better leave the rest of the simile to you. . . . I don't know whether the "Ghosts"

walk; but I have been told it did me much good in Boston literary circles. The publishers voluntarily made a five-years' — ten per cent — contract with me; but I have not heard from them. Notices were very contradictory outside of New York and Boston. Some said the stories were literal translations; others said they were fabrications, without any Chinese basis; others said the book was obscene; others called it "exquisitely spiritual" — in short, the critics did n't seem to know what to make of it. Three lines in the "Atlantic" consoled me amply for naughty Western criticism.

You may expect to hear *definitely* from me very soon — at latest, I suppose, ten days.

Affectionately L. HEARN

Have you any idea how big a catalogue it ought to be? — if 100, 200, 300 pp. 16mo? Would it be indexed generally, or by departments — duplex or single? Five pages a day on such a job would be work. Then rewriting at rate of ten pages per day. All supposing that no research or elaborated treatment of incident were required — only description and explanation.

I've had to open envelope to ask another question: Does he want the catalogue written in *French?* Because if he does, I would n't attempt it. No one but a Frenchman, or some rare men like Rossetti and Swinburne can write artistic French. I can't write French with delicacy and correctness.

Or does he simply want bad French turned into good English?

My experience is this. Translation — except for an artistic motive, and with ample leisure — never pays, either in self-satisfaction or anything else. Cataloguing, pure and simple, is the most terrible and tiresome of earthly labours; — first notebook and eyes; then arrangement of amplified notes by "a's" and "b's"; then enveloping or boxing, and pasting, then rewriting; then, O God! — the proofs!

I know how to do it, but it is so much *life* thrown away — so much thought-time made sterile. In this case the chief compensation would be opportunity to study the phases of Japanese art — the esprit.

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

New York, 1887

Dear Miss Bisland, — A small creature rang the bell at 136 Madison Avenue. A large and determined concierge responded, and the following converse ensued:

S. C. — "Miss Bisland — ?"
C. — "No, sir!"
S. C. — "Miss E-liz-a-beth Bisland — ?"
C. — "No, sir!"
S. C. — "Is n't this 136 Madison Avenue?"
C. — "Yes. — Used to live here. — Moved."
S. C. — "Do you not know where — ?"
C. — "No, sir."

S. C. — "None of her friends or relatives here, who could tell me?"

C. — "No!"

The sudden closing of the door here made a Period and a Finis.

Then I wandered away down a double row of magnificent things that seemed less buildings than petrifactions — astonishments of loftiness and silent power — and wondered how Miss Elizabeth Bisland must have felt when she first trod these enormous pavements and beheld these colossal dreams of stone trying to touch the moon. And reaching my friend Krehbiel's house I made this brief record of my vain effort to meet the grey eyes of E. B.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO H. E. KREHBIEL

SAINT-PIERRE, MARTINIQUE, 1887

DEAR KREHBIEL, — I was delighted to get your letter, the first which reached me from America during my trip. My own correspondence has been irregular, though I have written a good many short letters; but the amount of work on my hands has been something enormous — and I have only had five idle days, caused by a fever due to imprudence. I got into a marshy town, got wet, and came home with a burning headache. The result was not serious except that I had to stop all writing for a while.

You ask me to send you a hint about my work; but I think it were best to say nothing about it. I

have a very large mass of MS. prepared, and don't yet know what I am going to do with it: it is not polished as I should wish, but I hope to work it into proper shape in a few days more. It consists simply of a detailed account of impressions, sensations, colours, etc. I have tried to put the whole *feeling* of the trip on paper. Then I have about sixty dollars' worth of photos to illustrate it. My photo set is very complete; — I have also a rich collection of Coolie and half-breed types, including many nude studies.

Strange as you may think it, this trip knocks the poetry out of me! The imagination is not stimulated but paralyzed by the satiation of all its aspirations and the realization of its wildest dreams. The artistic sense is numbed by the display of colours which no artist could paint; and the philosophical sense is lulled to inactivity by the perpetual current of novel impressions, by the continual stream of unfamiliar sensory experiences. Concentration of mind is impossible.

It pleases me, however, to have procured material for stories, which I can write up at home; and for romantic material the West Indies offer an unparalleled field of research. I shall return to them again at my earliest opportunity; — the ground is absolutely untilled, and it is not in the least likely that anybody in the shape of a Creole is ever going to till it.

By this time you will have seen the doll. I want to remind you that this is more than a doll; it is really

an artistic model of the dress worn by the women of Martinique — big earrings and all. The real earrings and necklaces are pure gold; the former worth 175 francs a pair; the latter often running as high as 500, 600, even 900 francs.

In case this reaches you before leaving New York, I hope you will be able to make some arrangement with Joe or somebody, so that I can put my things in a place of safety for a day or two, until I can try to arrange matters with the Harpers. I will be obliged to stay a short while in New York — and shall want a room badly, until my MS. and photos have been disposed of, and my proof-reading has been done on "Chita." With affectionate regards to all,

Very truly yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. I return with the Barracouta.

My inquiries about the Marimba and other instruments have produced no result except the discovery that our negroes play the guitar, the flute, the flageolet, the cornet-à-piston! Some play very well; all the orchestras and bands are coloured. But the civilized instrument has killed the native manufacture of aboriginalities. The only hope would be in the small islands, or where slavery still exists, as in Cuba. There are one or two African songs still current, but they are sung to the tam-tam —

Welleli, welleli,
hm, hm!

Papa mon ce papa mon
hm, hm!
Welleli, welleli,
hm, hm!
Maman mon ce maman mon
hm, hm!
Welleli, etc.

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

GEORGETOWN, DEMERARA, *July*, 1887

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — I suppose you will have just a tiny little bit of curiosity to know about my impressions here? They have been all flavoured with that enchanting sensation which artists term *surprise*. The effect upon me has been such that I think the North will always look torpid to me — as a benumbed and livid part of our planet. Nearly all these isles are volcanic; and this largely accounts for the green and purple symmetry of their shapes. The colours are of the kind called "impossible"; — and the days have such an azure expansion, so enormous a luminosity that it does not really seem to be *our* sky above, but the heaven of some larger world.

That's all I can attempt to say about it now (in a general way) without wearying you.

Imagine old New Orleans, the dear quaint part of it, young and idealized as a master-artist might idealize it — made all tropical, with narrower and brighter streets, all climbing up the side of a volcanic peak to a tropical forest, or descending in

terraces of steps to the sea; — fancy our Creole courts filled with giant mangoes and columnar palms (a hundred feet in height sometimes); and everything painted in bright colours, and everybody in a costume of more than Oriental picturesqueness; — and astonishments of half-breed beauty; — and a grand tepid wind enveloping the city in one perpetual perfumed caress — fancy all this, and you may have a faint idea of the sweetest, queerest, darlingest little city in the Antilles: *Saint Pierre*, Martinique. I hope it will be my residence for the next two months — and for the latter part of my wretched little existence. I love it as if it were a human being.

Outside are queer little French islands, with queer names — "Marie Galante" is rather an old appellation for an island — full of Cytherean suggestion.

We leave this very fantastic and unhealthy land — now smitten with Gold-fever as well as other maladies — to-morrow. Then will come Trinidad, with its Hindoo villages to see. Photos, bought at Demerara and Saint Kitts, predict visions of Indian grace worth daring the perpendicular sun to see. I am now the only passenger. My last companion — a fine Northwestern man — goes, I fear, to leave his bones in the bush. From the interior men are being carried back to the coast to die, yet the stream pours on to the gold-mines. My miner thinks he can stand it: he has dug for African gold, under a fiercer sky. He was an odd fellow. Saw no beauty in these

islands. "No, partner — if you want to see scenery see the Rockies: that's something to look at! Even the sea's afraid of them mountains, — ran away from them: you can see four thousand feet up where the sea tried to climb before it got scared!"

Sometimes the apes on board are taught the experiences of life, the advantages of civilization. Torpedoes are tied to their tails; fire-crackers surround them with circles of crepitation and flame. Also they are occasionally paralyzed by unexpected sensations of electricity; — they have made the acquaintance of a galvanic battery; they have been induced to do foolish things which resulted in sharp and unfamiliar pains and burnings. Their lives are astonishments, and prolonged spasms of terror.

The sea at night is an awful and magnificent sight. It looks infernal — Acherontic; — black surges that break into star-spray; — an abyss full of moving lights that come and go.

Well, I can't write a good letter now; — wait till I get back to Martinique. I wanted you to *know* I had not forgotten my promise to write. You must make a trip down here some day. It is not hotter than New York except in the sun.

You can do whatever you wish. You have force to do it. You have more brains in your finger-tips than some who have managed to get a big reputation. The little talk about Grande Isle that night was an absolute poem — gave me a sense of the charm of the place such as I felt the first beautiful morning

there. You don't know what you can do, *if you want to.*

I think I should do something with this novel material, it is so rich in absurd colour! But I don't feel enthusiastic now. Enthusiasm has been numbed by a long series of violent sensations and unexpected experiences. I have artistic indigestion; — going to try to dream it away at divine, paradisaical Martinique. There I will write you again. My address will be, care American Consul. But you must n't write unless you have plenty of time; — I am only paying my debts, not trying to make you waste paper answering me.

I believe I am beginning to write absurdities: it is so hot that rain-clouds form in one's head.

Good-bye, believe the best you can of me.

Your friend

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

SAINT-PIERRE, MARTINIQUE, 1887

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — I am settled here for at least a month: — wish I could settle here forever. I love this quaint, whimsical, wonderfully-coloured little town — all its ups and downs, vistas of azure harbour and overshadowing volcanic hills — all the stones that whisper under the myriad naked feet of this fantastic population. It pleases me to find my affection for it is not merely inspiration: the place has fascinated more than one practical

American — persuaded them to abandon ambitions, contests, popular esteem, friends, society — and to settle here for the rest of their days, in delightful indolence and dreamy content.

In my trunk I have something for you: a Coolie girl's bracelet. It will not look so well on your arm as on hers, because its effect depends on a background of dark colour; and all this clumsy Indian jewelry is inartistically wrought. It is indeed made chiefly for economical reasons. Coolies so carry their wealth; — I saw one Hindoo wife with some $900 worth of jewelry upon her.

In the little Coolie village near Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, I sat, and looked at rudely painted Indian gods, while waiting for the silversmith to sit down before his ridiculous little anvil. All the palm-shadows, intensely black, crawled outside like tarantulas; it was a glowing day — blindingly blue: the light of a larger sun seemed to fill the world — a white sun — Sirius!

"Ra!" called out the Coolie smith when I told him I wanted to look at his jewelry; — and his wife came in. She wore the Hindoo garb without the long veils: a white robe like a Greek chiton, or rather like a lady's chemise — leaving the arms and ankles bare, and confined about the waist. I thought her very lovely — slender and delicate — a perfect bronze-colour: the gold-flower attached to the nostril did not impair the symmetry of the face; — extraordinary eyes and teeth. She held out

her pretty round arms for examination: there were about ten silver rings upon each: the two outer ones being round, the inner eight being flat. The arm was infinitely prettier than the bracelets; — I selected one ring, and the smith opened and removed it with an iron instrument and gave it me. It had a faint musky odour: perhaps that was why the smith insisted on putting it into an absurdly small furnace, and purifying it after the Indian manner.

I wanted to buy a pair of baby bracelets; — so they brought in the baby — a girl, and therefore (?) having a dress on. The little babies of the other sex wear nothing but circles of silver on arms and ankles. Sometimes the custom is extended; for the little wife who carried her girl baby to the post-office when I was at Demerara, carried it naked at her hip in the most primitive manner.

This Trinidad baby had absurdly large eyes — looked supernatural: the mother's eyes magnified. She held up her little arms and I chose two rings. Then she talked to me in — Creole patois! It is the commercial dialect of the poor; and the Hindoos learn it well.

Always truly

LAFCADIO HEARN

There are palms here over two hundred feet high. There are fish here of all the colours of marsh-sunset.

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

FORT DE FRANCE, MARTINIQUE, *July*, 1887

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — Imagine yourself turned into marble, all white — robed after the fashion of the Directory — standing forever on a marble pedestal, under an enormous azure day — encircled by a ring of tall palms, graceful as Creole women — and gazing always, always, over the summer sea, toward emerald Trois Islets.

That is *Josephine!* I think she looks just like you, "Mamzelle Josephine" — or Zefine, if you like.

I want to tell you a little story about her — just a little anecdote somebody told me on the street, which I want to develop into a sketch next week.

It was after the fall of the Second Empire — after France felt the iron heel of Germany upon her throat.

Far off in this delicious little Martinique, the Republican rage made itself felt; — the huge reaction passed over the ocean like a magnetic current. So it happened, in a little while, that the Martinique politicians resolved to do that which had already been done in France — to obliterate the memories of the Empire.

There was Mamzelle Zefine, par exemple! . . . They put a rope round her beautiful white neck. They prepared to destroy the statue.

Then Somebody rang the Church-bell — you ought to see the sleepy little church: it makes you

want to doze the moment you pass into its cool shadow. A vast crowd gathered in the Savane.

It was a crowd of women — mostly women who had been slaves — quadroons, mulattoesses; the house-servants, the bonnes, the nurses and housekeepers of the old days. (You could form no possible idea of this coloured Creole element without seeing it: it does not exist in New Orleans.) They gathered to defend Mamzelle Zefine.

When the Republican officials came with their workmen at sunrise, Mamzelle Zefine was still gazing toward Trois Islets; she was white as ever; her pure cold passionate face just as lovely: she seemed totally indifferent to what was about to happen — she was dreaming her eternal plaintive dream.

But she could well afford to feel indifferent! About her, under the circle of the palms, surged a living sea — a tide of angry yellow faces, above which flashed the lightning of cane-knives, axes, couteaux de boucher. "Ah! li vieu! — lâches! cafa'ds! pott'ons! Vos pas cabab toucher li! Touché li — yon tête fois! — Osé toucher li. Capons Républicains! Osé toucher li!"

Mamzelle Zefine still gazed plaintively toward Trois Islets. She must have seemed to that yellow population to live; — for each one she represented some young mistress, some petted child, some memory of the old colonial days. And all the love of the slave for the master — all the strange passionate senseless affection of the servant for the

Creole family — was stirred to storm by the mere idea of the proposed desecration. The man who should have dared to lay an evil finger upon Josephine that day would have been torn limb from limb in the public square. The officials were frightened and foiled: they pledged their faith that the statue should not be touched.

So they took the ropes away; and they piled flowers at Mamzelle Zefine's white feet; they garlanded her; they twined the crimson jessamines of the tropics about her beautiful white throat.

And she is still here — always in the circle of the palms, always looking to Trois Islets, always beautiful and sweet as a young Creole maiden — dreamy, gracious, loving — with a smile that is like some faint, sweet memory of other days.

Always

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

NEW YORK, 1887

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — Thanks for the gracious little letter. I wish I could see you, and see other friends; but fate forbids. Distances are too enormous; engagements imperative; preparations for coming journey made my head whirl. For I return to the tropics, dear Miss Bisland — probably forever: I imagine that civilization will behold me no more, except as a visitor at very long intervals. I would like to write you sometimes, praying only

that my letters be not ever shown unto newspaper people. You will hear from me soon again. I am off on Friday afternoon, and have not even the necessary time to do what I ought to do in the mere matter of exceedingly small purchases, outfits, etc.

Good-bye, with best regards and something a little more, too.

LAFCADIO HEARN

I have not seen Krehbiel at all — was out of town when I returned, and seems to have found no time afterwards.

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

NEW YORK, 1887

YOUR letter reached me just at a time when everything that had seemed solid was breaking up, and substance had become Shadow. It made me very foolish — made me cry. Your rebuke for the trivial phrase in my letter was very beautiful as well as very richly deserved. But I don't think it is a question of volition. It is necessary to obey the impulses of the Unknown for Art's sake — or rather, you *must* obey them. The Spahi's fascination by the invisible Forces was purely physical. I think I am right in going: perhaps I am wrong in thinking of making the tropics a home. Probably it will be the same thing over again: impulse and chance compelling another change.

The carriage — no, the New York hack and

hackman (no romance or sentimentality about these!) — is waiting to take me to Pier 49, East River. So I must end. But I have written such a ridiculous letter that I shan't put anybody's name to it.

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

SAINT-PIERRE, MARTINIQUE, *May*, 1888

DEAR GOULD, — One of your letters, I think a postal card, many months ago, caught me in British Guiana, another to-day finds me here. I left New Orleans in June, 1887, and have been travelling since, or at least sojourning in these tropics. I have been sick, too — have had some trouble fighting the influences of climate, trouble in trying to carry out large plans with absurdly small resources; and have been unable to do my friends justice. How could you think I could have been offended? It was only the other day, in a letter to the editor of "Harper's," that I referred to one of your delightful colour-theories.

Praise from you I value very highly. As to impress such a mind as yours means to me a great pride and pleasure. I am delighted "Chita" pleased you.

I have written a number of sketches on the West Indies — some of which may appear in a few months, others later on. It has been a hope of mine to make a unique book on these strange Hesperides, with their singularly mixed races; but I don't know whether I shall be able to carry the project out.

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

The climate is antagonistic to work. It is a benumbing power, rendering concentrated thought almost out of the question. I can now understand why the tropics have produced so little literature.

We are quarantined and isolated for the present by a long epidemic of small-pox, which among these populations means something as fatal as an Oriental plague. The whites are exempt. But the disease, although on the decline, still prevails to an extent rendering it doubtful when I can get away from here.

I would like much to hear from you when you have time. I am temporarily settled here, and everything goes well enough now, so that I can write regularly.

With best affection

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

GRAND ANSE, MARTINIQUE, *June*, 1888

DEAR DR. GOULD, — I am writing you from an obscure, pretty West Indian village, seldom visited by travellers. Tall palms, and a grand roaring sea, blue as lapis lazuli in spite of its motion.

I was certainly even more pleased to hear from you than you could have been at the receipt of my letter; — for in addition to the intellectual and sympathetic pleasure of such a correspondence, the comparative rarity of friendly missives, enhancing

their value, lends them certain magnetism difficult to describe — the sensation, perhaps, of that North, and that Northern vigour of mind which has made the world what it is, and that pure keen air full of the Unknowable Something which has made the Northern Thought.

I seldom have a chance now to read or speak English; and English phrases that used to seem absolutely natural already begin to look somewhat odd to me. Were I to continue to live here for some years more, I am almost sure that I should find it difficult to write English. The resources of the intellectual life are all lacking here — no libraries, no books in any language; — a mind accustomed to discipline becomes like a garden long uncultivated, in which the rare flowers return to their primitive savage forms, or are smothered by rank, tough growths which ought to be pulled up and thrown away. Nature does not allow you to think here, or to study seriously, or to work earnestly: revolt against her, and with one subtle touch of fever she leaves you helpless and thoughtless for months.

But she is so beautiful, nevertheless, that you love her more and more daily — that you gradually cease to wish to do aught contrary to her local laws and customs. Slowly, you begin to lose all affection for the great Northern nurse that taught you to think, to work, to aspire. Then, after a while, this nude, warm, savage, amorous Southern Nature succeeds in persuading you that labour and effort and

purpose are foolish things — that life is very sweet without them; — and you actually find youself ready to confess that the aspirations and inspirations born of the struggle for life in the North are all madness — that they wasted years which might have been delightfully dozed away in land where the air is always warm, the sea always the colour of sapphire, the woods perpetually green as the plumage of a green parrot.

I must confess I have had some such experiences. It appears to me impossible to resign myself to living again in a great city and in a cold climate. Of course I shall have to return to the States for a while — a short while, probably; — but I do not think I will ever settle there. I am apt to become tired of places — or at least of the disagreeable facts attaching more or less to all places and becoming more and more marked and unendurable the longer one stays. So that ultimately I am sure to wander off somewhere else. You can comprehend how one becomes tired of the very stones of a place — the odours, the colours, the shapes of Shadows, and tint of its sky; — and how small irritations become colossal and crushing by years of repetition; — yet perhaps you will not comprehend that one can actually become weary of a whole system of life, of civilization, even with very limited experience. Such is exactly my present feeling — an unutterable weariness of the aggressive characteristics of existence in a highly organized society. The higher the social develop-

ment, the sharper the struggle. One feels this especially in America — in the nervous centres of the world's activity. One feels at least, I imagine, in the tropics, where it is such an effort just to live, that one has no force left for the effort to expand one's own individuality at the cost of another's. I clearly perceive that a man enamoured of the tropics has but two things to do: — To abandon intellectual work, or to conquer the fascination of Nature. Which I will do will depend upon necessity. I would remain in this zone if I could maintain a certain position here; — to keep it requires means. I can earn only by writing, and yet if I remain a few years more, I will have become (perhaps?) unable to write. So if I am to live in the tropics, as I would like to do, I must earn the means for it in very short order.

I gave up journalism altogether after leaving New Orleans. I went to Demerara and visited the lesser West Indies in July and August of last year — returned to New York after three months with some MS. — sold it — felt very unhappy at the idea of staying in New York, where I had good offers — suddenly made up my mind to go back to the tropics by the very same steamer that had brought me. I had no commission, resolved to trust to magazine-work. So far I have just been able to scrape along; — the climate numbs mental life, and the inspirations I hoped for won't come. The real — surpassing imagination — whelms the ideal out of sight

and hearing. The world is young here — not old and wise and grey as in the North; and one must not seek the Holy Ghost in it. I suspect that the material furnished by the tropics can only be utilized in a Northern atmosphere. We will talk about it together; for I will certainly call on you in Philadelphia some day.

I would not hesitate, if I were you, to begin the magnum opus; — the only time to hesitate would be when it is all complete, before giving to the printer. Then one may perhaps commune with one's self to advantage upon the question of what might be gained or lost by waiting for more knowledge through fresh expansions of science. But the true way to attempt an enduring work is to begin it as a duty, without considering one's self in the matter at all, but the subject only — which you love more and more the longer you caress it, and find it taking form and colour and beauty with the patient years.

I am horribly ignorant about scientific matters; but sometimes the encouragement of a layman makes the success of the prelate.

Now, replying to your question about "Chita." "Chita" was founded on the fact of a child saved from the Lost Island disaster by some Louisiana fisher-folk, and brought up by them. Years after a Creole hunter recognized her, and reported her whereabouts to relatives. These, who were rich, determined to bring her up as young ladies are

brought up in the South, and had her sent to a convent. But she had lived the free healthy life of the coast, and could not bear the convent; — she ran away from it, married a fisherman, and lives somewhere down there now — the mother of multitudinous children.

And about my work, I can only tell you this: — I will have two illustrated articles on a West Indian trip in the "Harper's Monthly" soon — within four or five months. These will be followed by brief West Indian sketches. Other sketches, not suited for the magazine, will go to form a volume to be published later on. I do not correspond or write for any newspaper, and I would always let you know in advance where anything would be published written by me.

You know what the nervous cost of certain imaginative work means; and this sort of work I do not think I shall be able to do here. One has no vital energy to spare in such a climate. I cannot read Spencer here — gave up the "Biology" (Vol. II) in despair. But I did not miss the wonderful page about the evolution of the eye — hair — snail-horn — etc., etc. . . . I want to see anything you write that I can understand, with my limited knowledge of scientific terms and facts. And when you write again, tell me what you said of Loti in the letter I never received. Did you read his "Roman d'un Spahi"? I thought you would like it. If you do not, let me know why — because Loti has had much

literary influence upon me, and I want to know his faults as well as his merits.

With love to you

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

SAINT-PIERRE, MARTINIQUE, *August*, 1888

DEAR GOULD, — Many thanks for the *quid!* — the surprising *quid*. I have been waiting to send you the *quo*, which I do not like so well as one taken in New Orleans, of which I have no copy within reach. But before I tell you anything about the *quo*, I ought to scold you for your startling deception. I pictured you as a much younger man than myself — although quite conscious of meeting an intelligence much more virile and penetrating than my own, and with an experience of life larger: this did not, however, astonish me; for whatever qualities I have lie only in that one direction which pleased you and won your friendship — moreover, I had met several *much* younger men than myself, my mental superiors in every respect. But, all of a sudden you come upon me with such a revelation of your personality as makes me half afraid of you. I perceive that your envergure is much larger than I imagined: — I mean, of course, the mental spread-of-wing; and then your advice and suggestions, while manifesting your ability to teach me much in my own line, resemble only those proffered by old experienced masters in literary guidance. It is

exactly the advice of Alden, among one or two others.

Now about the *quo*. I am about five feet three inches high, and weigh about one hundred and thirty-seven pounds in good health; — fever has had me down to one hundred and twenty-six. Nothing phthisical — thirty-six and three quarters inches round the chest, stripped. Was born in June (27th), 1850, in Santa Maura (the antique Leucadia), of a Greek mother. My father, Dr. Charles Bush Hearn, who spent most of his life in India, was surgeon-major of the Seventy-Sixth British regiment (now merged in West Riding Battalion). Do not know anything about my mother, whether alive or dead; — was last heard of (remarried) in Smyrna, about 1858–59. My father died on his return from India. There was a queer romance in the history of my father's marriage. It is not, however, of the sort to interest you in a letter. I am very near-sighted, have lost one eye, which disfigures me considerably; and my near-sightedness always prevented the gratification of a natural penchant for physical exercise. I am a good swimmer; that is all.

Your advice about story-writing is capital; I am not so sure about your suggestion of plot. I cannot believe — in view of the extraordinary changes (changes involving even the whole osseous structure) wrought in the offspring of Europeans or foreigners within a single generation by the tropical climate —

that anything of the parental moral character on the *father's* side would survive with force sufficient to produce the psychical phenomena you speak of. In temperate climates these do survive astonishingly, even through generations; in the tropics, Nature moulds every new being *at once* into perfect accord with environment, or else destroys it. The idea you speak of occurred to me also; it was abandoned after a careful study of tropical conditions. It could only be used on an *inverse* plot — transporting the tropical child to the North. At least, I think so, with my present knowledge on the subject — which might be vastly improved, no doubt. . . .

About story-writing, dear friend, you ought to know I would like to be able to do nothing else. But even in these countries, where life is so cheap, I could not make the pot — or as they call it here, the canari — boil by story-writing until I gain more literary success, and can obtain high prices. A story takes at least ten or twelve months to write, that is, a story of the length of "Chita." Suppose it brings only five hundred dollars — half as much as you will soon be able to obtain for a single operation! It is pretty hard to live even in the tropics on that sum. I must write sketches too. They do me other good also, involve research I might otherwise neglect. I have prepared some twelve sketches in all, which obligated investigation that will prove invaluable for a forthcoming novelette.

I like your firm, strong, sonorous letter, better

than anything of the sort I ever received. The only thing I did not relish in it was the suggestion that I should prepare a lecture, or make an appearance before a private club. I would not do it for anything! I shrink from real life, however, not at all because I am pessimistic. It is a very beautiful world: — the ugliness of some humanity only exists as the shadowing that outlines the view; the nobility of man and the goodness of woman can only be felt by those who know the possibilities of degradation and corruption. Philosophically I am simply a follower of Spencer, whose mind gives me the greatest conception of Divinity I can yet expand to receive. The faultiness is not with the world, but with myself. I inherit certain susceptibilities, weaknesses, sensitivenesses, which render it impossible to adapt myself to the ordinary milieu; I have to make one of my own, wherever I go, and never mingle with that already made. True, I lose much knowledge, but I escape pains which, in spite of all your own knowledge, you could not wholly comprehend, for the simple reason that you *can* mingle with men. By the way, it is no small disadvantage in life to be 5 ft. 3 in. high. I remember observing, at a great gathering of American merchant princes, that the small or insignificant looking men present might have been counted on the fingers of one hand. Success in life still largely depends upon the power to impose respect, the reserve of mere physical force; since the expansion of everybody's individuality — at the

expense of everybody else's individuality — is still the law of existence.

I am not yet sure what I am going to do. One thing certain is that I am to go to South or to Central America — for monetary reasons. I may linger here long enough to finish a novelette. If not able to do so, I will perhaps be in New York before December. I left it October 2, 1887, after a stay of only three weeks, to return to the tropics. It was then impossible to visit Philadelphia. Should I go to the Continent from here, you will know at least six weeks in advance.

Thanks for the superb paper on Loti. I cannot imagine anything much finer in the way of literary analysis. But what does James want? — evolution to leap a thousand years? What he classes as sensual perceptions must be sensitized and refined supernally — fully evolved and built up *before* the moral ones, of which they are the physiological foundations, pedestals. Granting the doubt as to the ultimate nature of Mind, it is still tolerably positive that its development — so far as man is concerned — follows the development of the nervous system; and that very sensuousness which at once delights and scandalizes James, rather seems to me a splendid augury of the higher sensitiveness to come, in some future age of writers and poets — the finer "*sensibility of soul*," whose creative work will caress the nobler emotions more delicately than Loti's genius ever caressed the senses of colour and form and odour.

You ask about my idea of Whitman? I have not patience for him — not as for Emerson. Enormous *suggestiveness* in both, rather than clear utterance. I used to like John Weiss better than Emerson. Then there is a shagginess, an uncouthness, a Calibanishness about Whitman that repels. He makes me think of some gigantic dumb being that sees things, and wants to make others see them, and cannot for want of a finer means of expression than Nature gives him. But there is manifest the rude nobility of the man — the primitive and patriarchal soul-feeling to men and the world. Whitman lays a Cyclopean foundation on which, I fancy, some wonderful architect will yet build up some marvellous thing. . . . Yes, there is nonsense in Swinburne, but he is merely a melodist and colourist. He enlarges the English tongue — shows its richness, unsuspected flexibility, admirable sponge-power of beauty-absorption. He is not to be despised by the student.

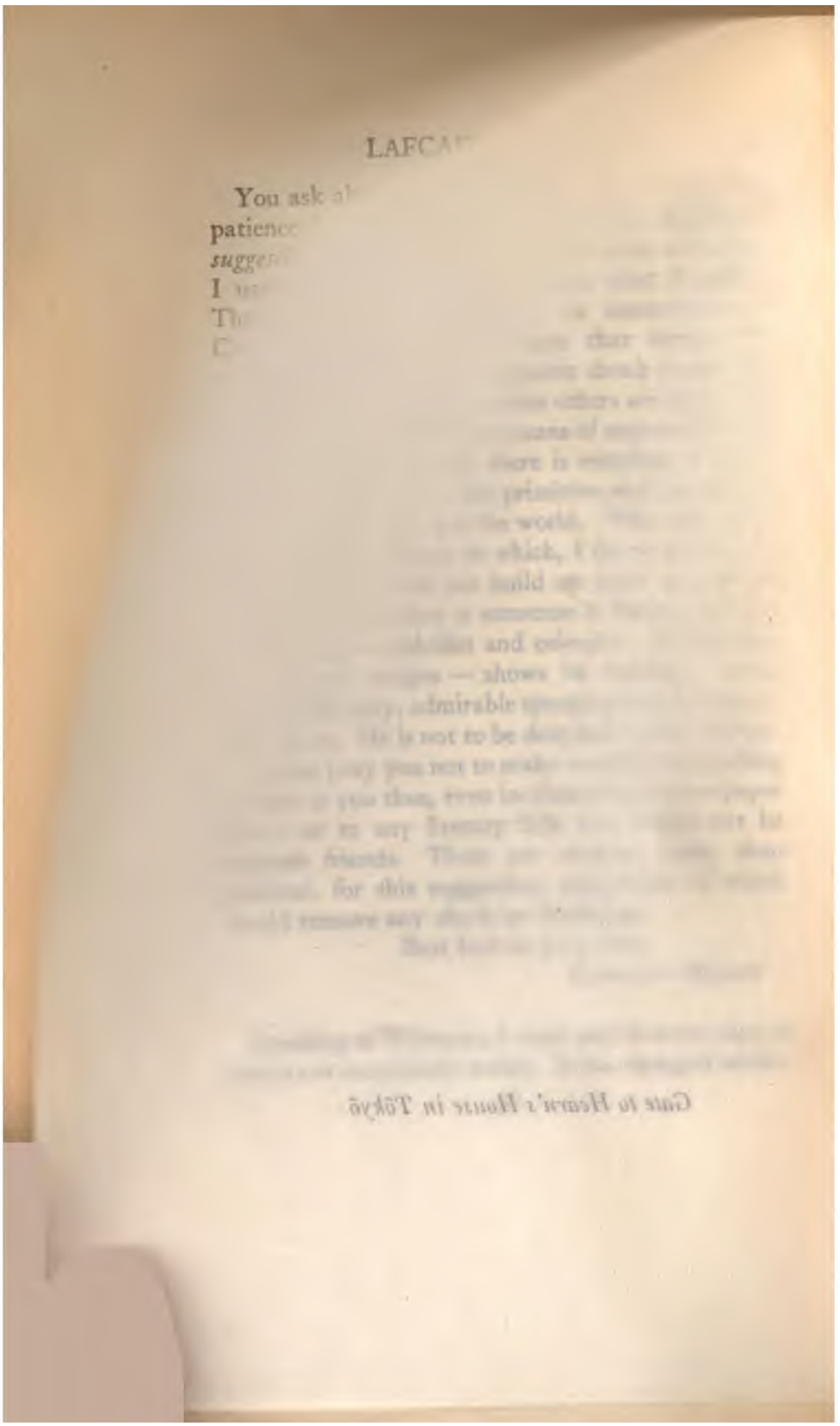
Let me pray you not to make mention of anything written to you thus, even incidentally, to newspaper folk — or to any literary folk who would not be *intimate* friends. There are reasons, more than personal, for this suggestion, acceptance of which would remove any check on frankness.

Best love to you, from

LAFCADIO HEARN

Speaking of Whitman, I must add that my idea of him is not consciously stable. It has changed within

Gate to Hearn's House in Tōkyō



some years. What I like, however, was not Whitman exactly — rather the perception of something Whitman feels, and disappoints by his attempted expression of.

After closing letter I remember you wanted to know about illustrations in magazine. They are after photos. I am sorry to say incorrect use has been made of several: the types published as Sacratra were not Sacratra, but in two cases half-breed Coolie — one seemingly of Southern India, showing a touch of Malay. There were other errors. It is horrible not to be able to correct one's own work — on account of irregularities in mail involved by quarantine. In the December number you will see a study of a peculiar class of young girls here. If you want, yourself, to have some particular photo of some particular thing, send word, and I will try to get it for you.

I can only work here of mornings. Nobody dreams of eating before noon: all rise with the sun. After 2 P.M., the heat and weight of the air make thinking impossible. Your head gets heavy, as if there was lead in it, and you sleep.

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

SAINT-PIERRE, MARTINIQUE
October, 1888

DEAR FRIEND GOULD, — I have read your delightful letter — also, the delightful essays of James you so kindly sent me. I suspect James has not his equal as

a literary chemist: the analyses of his French contemporary, Lemaître, are far less qualitative. You have made me know him as a critic; — I had only known him as a novelist. My work has been poor; it has been condensed and recondensed for the magazine till all originality has been taken out of it; finally I never had a chance to revise it in proof. I believe I have temporarily lost all creative power: it will come back to me, perhaps, when I inhale some Northern ozone.

I would like to call your attention to the article by Loti in "Fortnightly Review" — "Un Rêve," a delicious little psychological phenomenon. Have you seen "Madame Chrysanthemum" — wonderfully illustrated!

Are you perfectly, positively sure there is really a sharp distinction between moral and physical sensibilities? I doubt it. I suspect what we term the finer moral susceptibilities signify merely a more complex and perfect evolution of purely physical sensitiveness. The established distinction simply seems to me that "moral" feelings are those into which the sexual instinct does not visibly enter, or those in which some form of desire, some form of egotism, does not predominate at the cost of justice to others. There is a queer vagueness about all definitions of the moral sense. When one's physical sensibilities are fully developed and properly balanced, I do not think wickedness to others possible. The cruel and the selfish are capable of doing

what is called wrong, because they are ignorant of the suffering inflicted. Thorough consciousness of the result of acting forms morality, if morality is self-restraint, self-sacrifice, incapacity to injure unnecessarily; — one who understands pain does not give it. Of course, I am not a believer in free will. I do not believe in the individual soul — though in the manifestations of a universal human, or divine, soul, I am inclined to believe, or to have that doubt which almost admits of belief. What offends in certain writings, I suppose, is the feeling that the writer's faculties are not perfectly balanced — that certain senses are so much more developed than others that one can suspect him of yielding to cruelties of egotism. Perhaps I may say that I would call moral feelings, as distinguished from those termed physical, the sensitiveness of perception of suffering in others — of the consequences of acts. But can those be thoroughly developed before those which conduce to self-preservation? I imagine the reverse to be the case. By the super-refinement of the earlier sensations comes the capacity for the "higher sentiments." It is true that moral standards are very old, but those existing are also very defective. Evolutionally, egotism must precede altruism; — altruism itself being only a sort of double reflex action of egotism. — All this is very badly written; but you can catch the idea I am trying to express.

When you think of tropical Nature as cruel and

splendid, like a leopard, I fancy the Orient, which is tropical largely, dominates the idea. Humanity has a great beauty in these tropics, a great charm — that of childishness, and the goodness of childishness. As for the mysterious Nature, which is the soul of the land, it was understood by the ancient Mexicans, whose goddess of flowers, Coatlicue, was robed in a robe of serpents interwoven. She is rich in death as in life, this Nature, and lavish of both. I would love her; but I fear she is an enemy of the mind — a hater of mental effort.

No, indeed, I did not laugh at your experiences. I have had nearly as multiform; but mine were less successful — I was less fitted for them. I have not your advantages, nor capacities. I never learned German. It is only in America such careers are possible. I wish I could have finished like you, as a physician; for I hold, that with the modern development of medicine as an enormous interbranching system of science and philosophy, the physician is the only perfect man, mentally. Like those old Arabian physicians who affected to treat the soul, the modern knows the mind, the reason of actions, the source of impulses — which must make him the most generous of men to the faults of others.

I don't like your plot for a medical novel at all. It involves ugliness. I believe in Théophile Gautier's idea of art, study only the beautiful; — create only ideals, therefore. You are not a realist, I am sure. Then your plot is too thin. It has not the

beauty nor depth of that simple narrative about a famous painter, or writer — I forget which — whose imagination rendered it impossible for him to complete his medical studies. Shapes impressed themselves upon his brain as on the brain of an artist: vividly to painfulness. He was in love, engaged to be married; under the peach flesh and behind the velvet gaze, he always saw the outlined skull, the empty darkness of void orbits. He had to abandon medicine for art. A very powerful short sketch might be made of this *fact*.

I believe in a medical novel — a wonderful medical novel. We must chat about it. Why not use a fantastic element — anticipate discoveries hoped for — anticipate them so powerfully as to make the reader believe you are enunciating realities?

Your objection to my idea is quite correct. I have already abandoned it. It would have to be sexual. Never could you find in the tropics that magnificent type of womanhood, which, in the New England girl, makes one afraid even to think about sex, while absolutely adoring the personality. Perfect natures inspire the love that is a fear. I don't think any love is noble without it. The tropical woman inspires a love that is half a compassion; this is always dangerous, untrustworthy, delusive — pregnant with future pains innumerable.

I don't know why you hold the work of Spencer, etc., more colourless than those of the other philos-

ophers and scientists whom you have studied — all except beastly Hegel: there is an awful poetry to me in the revelation of which these men are the mouthpieces, as much vaster than the old thoughts as the foam of suns in the via lactea is vaster than the spume of a wave on the sea-beach. Wallace I know only as a traveller and naturalist; is it the same Wallace? I am very fond of him too: he is very human, fraternal: he is not like God the Father as Spencer is. I suppose what we need is God the Holy Ghost. He is not yet come.

Flower, who wrote that interesting little book "Fashion in Deformity" and many other excellent things, could find some good texts here. I am convinced now that most of our fashions are deformities; that grace is savage, or must be savage in order to be perfect; that man was never made to wear shoes; that in order to comprehend antiquity, the secret of Greek art, one must know the tropics a little (so much has fashion invaded the rest of the world), and that the question of more or less liberty in the sex relation is like the tariff question — one of localities and conditions, scarcely to be brought under a general rule.

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

SAINT-PIERRE, MARTINIQUE
February, 1889

DEAR GOULD, — A letter to you has been lying on my desk for months unfinished — I can only

just gum the envelope and let it go as it is. I am obliged at intervals — thank Goodness, only at very long ones — to let all correspondence, even the most important, wait a little or risk the results of interrupting a work which exacts all one's thinking time during waking hours. This has been partly my case — having just completed a novelette; but I have also had a good deal of trouble about other matters that left me no chance to do anything until now. I am free again — I hope for a good long time.

Meanwhile I received your pamphlets, and read every one with more pleasure than you could readily believe a non-scientific man could feel in them. Of course, those which interested me most were:

1. That on the Homing Instinct (a much better word than the French "orientation"). 2. That on the electric light. My first experience with the light was painful; then I learned to like it (the white, not the yellow) very much and found gaslight intensely disagreeable afterward. By the way, do you correspond with Romanes, who solicits correspondence on the subject of animals? You know him, of course, the author of "Animal Intelligence" and "Mental Evolution in Animals." A man like that ought to be delighted with such a splendid and powerful suggestion as that of your pamphlet. I hope you are not too patriotic to think you cannot do better with a scientific suggestion abroad than at home. There are certain things that seem to me

too worthy to remain buried in the archives of a medical society — which ought to reach a larger scientific circle through a more eclectic medium, such as that of the superb foreign reviews, devoted to what used to be called natural history, but for which the term has long ago become too small. Still I am sure you must have heard from your paper on the homing instinct if the publication in which it appeared reached the quarters it ought to have reached.

I don't know what to tell you about myself. Since October last I have been buried in my room — facing, happily, a semi-circle of Mornes curving away into a sea like lapis-lazuli — and have neither heard nor seen anything else. We had an epidemic of yellow fever which carried away many Europeans and strangers; but it is over, and the weather is delightful, if you can call weather delightful which keeps you drenched in perspiration from morning to night, and forces you to lie down and sleep in the afternoon if you dare attempt to write or read. The difficulty of work in such a climate only those who have had the experience can understand. I think my case is an experiment; almost a phenomenon — and I am very curious to know the result by the verdict upon my work. I cannot judge it myself here. What at sundown seems good in the morning appears damnably bad; and I was obliged to give every page a test of three or four days' waiting. My novelette made itself out of an incident related to

me about a case of heroism during a great negro revolt.

There is no question but that I shall be in New York this summer, for a while. It is imperative. I have to oversee work before it can be published; — that which already appeared was in terribly bad shape on account of my not having seen the proofs. Then I may be getting out a little book.

Did you see the incident in regard to the admission of a remarkable young lady doctor into the profession by the faculty of Paris — the remarks of Charcot and others? I thought of your medical novel. There were some remarks very suggestive made. The thesis of the candidate was the position and duty of woman as a physician. You know what those French are, and what peculiar ways they have of looking at the question of women as physicians; — the Paris papers made all kinds of observations scabreuses; but the dignity of the girl carried her splendidly through the ordeal — an ordeal to which Americans would never put a female student.

I have a curious compilation — "Etudes pathologiques et historiques sur l'origine et la propagation de la Fièvre Jaune"(1886) — perhaps you know it already — by Dr. Cornilliac of Martinique. If you do not know it I will send it you from New York. It contains a great deal of valuable matter regarding the climate of the West Indies, and formative influences of that climate on races and temperament. Martinique has had several physicians of colonial

celebrity — how great I cannot estimate, being ignorant of their comparative value; but some of them have a decided charm as writers and historians. Such was Rufz de Lavison, author of a delightful history of the colony, and a work upon the *Trigonocephalus*, which would not bear equal praise, I fancy. If you want any information about medical matters in Martinique, I will hunt it up for you.

I hope to see you and have a great chat with you. But the heat is great, and there is an accumulation of letters to answer, and you will forgive me for saying for the moment good-bye.

Your sincere friend

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

SAINT-PIERRE, MARTINIQUE
April, 1889

DEAR GOULD, — I read your pamphlets with intense pleasure: that on the effect of reflex neurosis, of course, impressed me only as a curious research; but your paper on dreams, full of truth and suggestive beauty, had much more than a scientific interest for me. There is a world of poetical ideas and romantic psychology evoked by its perusal. I wonder only that you did not dwell more upon the softness, sweetness, impalpable goodness of this dream-world in which everything — even what we usually think wrong — seems to be right. Doubtless all man's dreams of paradise, of a golden past

age, or a perfect future, were born of the thin light vanishing sensations of dream. The work of Gautier cited by you — "Avatar" — was my first translation from the French. I never could find a publisher for it, however, and threw the MS. away at last in disgust. It is certainly a wonderful story; but the self-styled Anglo-Saxon has so much damnable prudery that even this innocent phantasy seems to shock his sense of the "proper."

You will be pleased to hear my novelette has been a success with the publishers. It cost me terrible work in this continual heat, small as it is; and I feel so mentally blank that I must get back to the States for a while to seek some vitality, brighten whatever blood I have got left after two years of tropical air.

If you could find me in Philadelphia a very quiet room where I could write without noise for a few months, I would try my luck there. New York is stupefying; I know too many people there; and I want to be very quiet — only to see a friend or two now and then, when I am in good trim for a chat. I shall return to the West Indies in the winter.

Address me if you have time to write c/o H. M Alden, Edr. "Harper's Magazine"; — for I shall have left Martinique, doubtless, by the time this reaches you.

Faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

Dr. Matas sent me your pretty eulogy of "Chita" — which I often re-read afterward, and which gave me encouragement when I began to doubt whether I could do anything else. . . . I don't think I shall write another story in the same manner — feel I have changed very much in my way of looking at things and of writing. "Chita" will soon be sent to you in a book form as a souvenir of Grande Isle: it is not as short a story as it looked in the serried type of "Harper's" — will make a volume of two hundred and twenty-five pages. I will have something else to send you, however, that will interest you more as to novelty — a volume of tropical sketches.

I wonder whether you could ever throw upon paper the thoughts you uttered to me that evening I visited you nearly two years ago — when you said *why* you liked Grande Isle. In your few phrases you said much that I had been trying to express and could not — at least it so seemed to me. . . . I have seen a great many strange beaches since; but nothing like the morning charm of Grande Isle ever revealed itself. I wonder if I were to see it now, whether I should feel the same pleasure. . . .

Thanks for those verses! — there is a large, strong, strange beauty in them. There seems, you know, to be just now a straining-up of eyes to look for some singer able to prophesy — to chant even one hymn of that cosmic faith that is stealing upon the world.

Affectionately your friend

LAFCADIO HEARN

in by one door as you went out at the other. Now there are cubic miles of cut granite and iron fury between us. I shall at once find a hackman to take me away. I am sorry not to see you — but since you live in hell what can I do? I will try to find you again this summer.

Best affection L. H.

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

PHILADELPHIA, 1889

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — A week ago in New York I was asking a friend where you were, but could then obtain no satisfactory information without taking steps I had no time to attempt. I was really glad to get out of the frightful whirl and roar of modern improvements as soon as possible, but regretted not seeing you, even while assured of being able to do so before long.

It is true I have been silent with my friends: I did not write seven letters in seventeen months — not even business letters. It was very difficult to write anything in the continuous enervating heat; and I had to struggle with difficulties of the most unlooked for sort, incessantly — until I found correspondence become almost impossible. But I thought of you very often; and wondered if you were still in that terrible metropolis. I saw in Max O'Rell's book some lines about a charming young lady and thought it must have been you. . . . I returned on the 8th from Martinique.

brain itself is without sensation, and the eye sees all but itself. I am not anxious to see my soul; but the fact of inability to see it encourages me to believe it is better than the thing called L. H.

I don't know that I wrote anything clever enough to be worth your using, but it is a pleasure you should think so. I can only suggest that the adoption of my poor notions would tend to make me selfish about such as I might think really good ones — I would keep them out of my letters, until they could get into print!?!

Sub rosa, now! . . . My Martinique novelette comes out — the first part — in January. I think you will like it better than "Chita": it is more mature and more exotic by far. It will run through two numbers. They have made some illustrations which I have not seen, and am therefore afraid of. Unless an illustration either reflects precisely or surpasses the writer's imagination, it hurts rather than helps. By the way, have you ever met H. F. Farny? Farny is an Alsatian, a fine man, and a superb sketcher — though lazy as a serpent. But if you ever want imaginative drawing of a certain class, he is one to do it.

Please don't ask me when I'm going to New York. I really can't find out. I wish I could. I ought to be there on the 15th. But I am peculiarly situated, tied up by a business-muddle — tangled by necessities of waiting for information — tormented, befuddled, anxious beyond expression about an unde-

cided plan — shivering with cold, and longing for the tropics. All my life I have suffered with cold — all kinds of cold — psychical and physical; — I hate cold!!!! — I *never* can resign myself to live in it! — I can't even think in it, and I would not be afraid of that Warm Place where sinners are supposed to go! Perhaps the G. A. will sentence me to everlasting sojourn in an iceberg when I have ceased to sin.

Very faithfully, and to some extent apologetically.
For you I do remain always as nice as I can be.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

PHILADELPHIA, 1889

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — I can't say definitely when I shall be in New York, to have the delightful pleasure of a chat with you — something I have been looking forward to for fully a year; but I will write to tell you a few days in advance. I am drifting about with the forces of circumstance — following directions of least resistance. Just now I have a large mass (at least it looks very big to me) of MS. to amend and emend and arrange into a tropical book: you will like some things in it. When this job is finished, in a couple of weeks, it is probable I will set to work on a short sketch or story, for which I have the material partly arranged; and then I will go to New York. It is so quiet in this beautiful great city, and my present environment is

so pleasant, that I am sure of doing better work here than I could in that frightful cyclone of electricity and machinery called New York. . . .

I am afraid you were right about the tropics, and the fascination of climate. It is still upon me, and I shall find it very difficult to conquer the temptation to return to the French colonies: the main fact which helps me is the conviction that I cannot work there — one's memory and will blurs and fails in the incessant heat and sleepy air; and for three months before leaving I could not write a line. . . . My friends advise me to try the Orient next time; and I think I shall.

I have a novelette in the "Magazine" pigeonholes — you will like it; but I don't know when it is going to come out.

It is not a little pleasure to know that my admiration of your verses can be an encouragement; — you have quite forgiven my ancient effort to *amend* a stanza by spoiling it! . . . I think your present position will leave you time — after a while — for all you love to do, and can do so uniquely. Magazine editing is so largely a question of method and system — so far as I can learn — that I fancy you will eventually find it possible to claim a few hours every day for yourself; — and such systematic work as you must take hold of, will not, like journalistic routine, deaden aspiration. I hope you will have a greater success with the new monthly than you yourself expect, and I am sure you will if you have

fair chances at all. — But I must wait for the opportunity to see you — because what one writes (at least what I myself write) on such matters sounds so fictitious and flat — though you know it comes from your sincere friend LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

PHILADELPHIA, 1889

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — It is true that I am only a small Voice; — but the Voice has been uninterruptedly in the City of Doctors and Quakers, with the exception of a much regretted interim passed in looking at that monstrosity — aptly described by C. D. Warner as "having been cut out with a scroll-saw" — Atlantic City. . . . (May I never, never behold anything resembling it again!) I fear you must have written the address wrong — so I send you the right one. It will always do: no matter where I be. The Voice will call at 475 Fourth Avenue as soon as it can. It is not its fault that it has not so done already. Everything to be written must be finished, if possible, by the 15th prox. — so that I can get some place where the air is blue before cold weather. I will not be able to run away from the country before Christmas anyhow.

I trust you are very, very well — and as — everything — nice as anybody could wish, and with best regards, remain always,

Your very true and positive friend

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. Now I want to see those letters which came back from the Dead Letter Office.

Is it really so?

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

PHILADELPHIA, 1889

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — I know I am a horrid ignis fatuus; but the proofs of "Chita" are only half-read, and I have no time to get away till it is all done. Then I am working on a sketch — then there will be more proof-reading to do on the other book. But I will certainly get away in a few weeks more, and will have ever so many things to tell you.

I have never seen the "Cosmopolitan" in its new dress, and I do not know what has been going on anywhere. . . .

Philadelphia is a city very peculiar — isolated by custom antique, but having a good solid social morality, and much peace. It has its own dry drab newspapers, which are not like any other newspapers in the world, and contain nothing not immediately concerning Philadelphia. Consequently no echo from New York enters here — nor any from anywhere else: there are no New York papers sold to speak of. The Quaker City does not want them — thinks them in bad taste, accepts only the magazines and weeklies. But it's the best old city in the whole world all the same.

Faithfully

L. HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

PHILADELPHIA, 1889

MY DEAR MISS BISLAND, — I don't know whether you saw a little gem of Loti's in the "Fortnightly": I cut it out and send it — also an attempt at translation which proves the wisdom of the English magazine editor in printing it in French — and a comment of mine. I don't think you are likely to wish to print such a thing as the translation; but if you should, don't use it without sending me a proof, because it is full of errors.

While in Saint-Pierre, Martinique, I found it — originally contributed, in French, to the "Fortnightly" for August, 1888 — copied into a French paper. The impression made by reading it startled me for reasons independent of the exquisite weirdness of the thought. There was the great orange sunset of the tropics before me, over a lilac sea — bronzing the green of the mango, and tamarind-trees, and the broad, satiny leaves of bananier and balisier. The interior described in the vision was not of modern Saint-Pierre; but I knew an old interior in Fort de France, whose present quaint condition repeated precisely the background of the dream. A hundred years ago there were but two places on the sunset-side of Martinique which could have presented the spectacle of the little low streets described — Fort de France and Saint-Pierre. The high mountains cut off the sunset glow at an early

hour on the eastern side of the island. It seemed to me a strange coincidence that in "Les Colonies," a local paper, I had just read also, that some old cemetery of Fort de France was about to be turned into a playground for children.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

PHILADELPHIA, 1889

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — Verily shirîn, shirîntar, and shirîntarin art thou — and Saadi in the Garden of the Taj likewise — and also the letter which I have just received.

Emotionally the book is surely Arnold's strongest: it has that intensity of sweetness which touches the sphere of pain. One need not seek in the Bostan or Gulistan for the essence of that volume: the Oriental thought has been transfigured in its reflection from a nineteenth century mind. There has been in one of Edwin Arnold's books some suggestion of a future religion of human goodness and human brotherhood, through recognition of soul-unity — but in none, I think, so strangely as in this. And then, what horror to read the very coarse interview published recently in a daily paper: the brutal repetition of a man's words uttered under constraint, about the most sacred of sentiments!..

No; I won't go to New York till you come back. I trust you will not overwork yourself: when we see (I mean "hear") each other, we can talk over all

known devices for lightening literary duties. I am acquainted with some; and I would not have you fall sick for anything — unless you were to do me something "awfully mean": then I'm afraid I would not be so sorry as I ought to be.

I will try to give you something for the Christmas number anyhow — but not very long. By the way, I have an idea which may be wrong, but seems to me worth uttering. The prose fiction which lives through the centuries in the short story: like the old Greek romances — narratives like "Manon Lescaut"; "Paul et Virginie"; the "Candide" of Voltaire; the "Vicar of Wakefield"; "Undine," etc., outlive all the ampler labour of their authors. It seems to me that with this century the great novel will pass out of fashion: three-quarters of what is written is unnecessary — is involved simply by obedience to effete formulas and standards. As a consequence we do not read as we used to. We read only the essential, skipping all else. The book that compels perusal of every line and word is the book of power. Create a story of which no reader can skip a single paragraph, and one has the secret of force — if not of durability. My own hope is to do something in accordance with this idea: no descriptions, no preliminaries, no explanations — nothing but the feeling itself at highest intensity. I may fail utterly; but I think I have divined a truth which will yet be recognized and pursued by stronger minds than mine. The less material, the more force;

— the subtler the power the greater, as water than land, as wind than water, as mind than wind. I would like to say something about light, heat, electricity, rates of ether-vibration; — but the notion will work itself out in your own beautiful mind without any clumsy attempts of mine to illustrate.

— About the translation — do as you please — but don't please put it in a great big daily, next to the account of a prize-fight or a murder — and please, if you do anything with it, see, *above all things earthly*, that I get proofs. But I would just as soon you would keep it. I made it for you, and am glad you had not seen the original previously. I thought the "Cosmopolitan" was a sort of literary weekly. It is a beautiful little magazine — full of surprises; and I trust it is going to win a great success.

Good-bye; — your Voice wishes you a very happy pleasure-trip, in which you will feel all sorts of new feelings, and dream all manner of new dreams.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

PHILADELPHIA, 1889

THIS morning I dropped you a little note; but this afternoon, reading your book-chat in the "Cosmopolitan" I find I must write you something more impersonal.

— You know, perhaps, that Spencer's thought about education — the paramount necessity of educating the Will through the Emotion — has received,

consciously or unconsciously, more attention in Italy than elsewhere. The Emotions are not, as a rule, educated at all outside of the home-circle. The great public schools of all countries have a system which either ignores the emotions, or leaves them unprotected; — while all sectarian teaching warps and withers them in the direction, at least, of their natural growth. You know all this, I suppose, better than I. But perhaps you do not know the "Cuore" of Edmondo de Amicis (Thos. Y. Crowell & Co.), which has passed through 39 Italian editions. And if you do not know it, I pray you to read it without skipping a single phrase. It is as full of heart-sweetness as attar-of-roses is full of flower-ghosts; and it seems a revelation of what emotional education might accomplish.

I read Brownell's book at your suggestion. It contains, I think, the best teaching about *how* to study French character; but I could not accept many of its inferences — especially in regard to art and morality — without reluctance. There is a sense of something wanting in the book — something lucid and spiritual (is it Conviction?) that makes it heavy. How luminous and psychically electric is Lowell's book compared with it. And how much nobler a soul must be the dreamer of Chosön!

— I shall never write "Miss Bisland" again, except upon an envelope. It is a formality — and you are you: you are not a formality — but a somewhat. And I am only "*I*"

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

1889

DEAR GOULD, — Verily there is no strength nor power but from God — the High, the Great! I have thy letter, O thou of enormous working capacity, and I admire and wonder, but am in no wise sorry for thee, seeing thou doest that which thou art able to do, and findest pleasure therein and excellence and dignity and power — and that if thou wert doing it not thou wouldst surely be doing something else; — for God (whose name be exalted!) hath numbered thee among those who find felicity in exceeding activity. Thou art indeed forty-one years old, by reckoning of time; but as thou art of the Giants this reckoning hath no signification for thee. Verily thou art but twenty-five years old, and thou shalt never know age until a hundred winters shall have passed over thee. And all things which thou dost desire shall be accorded unto thee by Him who, like thyself, reposeth never, and whose blessed name be forever exalted! Also unto thee shall the patients come, as an army for multitude, so that thy bell shall make but one ringing through all thy days continuously, and that thy neighbours shall be oppressed by reason of the concourse in the street about thy dwelling.

But as for me, concerning whom thou makest inquiry, trouble not thyself about thy servant, whose trust and power are in God — the High, the

Great! That which shall be shall be, and that which hath been shall not be again: — for the moment, indeed, I am concerned only to know why the flame of my lamp goeth *upward*, and all flame likewise — unless it be for the purpose of praising God (whose name be exalted by all living creatures!). For thou saidst unto me, being a Kafeer, that Flame is a vibration only; but thou hast not been able to tell me the mystery of the pointing of fire and the upreaching of it to the feet of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Here it raineth always, and this Soul of me is slowly evaporating, despite the perusal of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who spake of souls. Meseems that each time I behold the eyes of her concerning whom I spake to thee, something of that soul is drawn out unto her, and devoured perhaps for sustenance of that Jinneyah — which is her own soul. So that mine hath become thin as the inner shadow wrought by a strong double light upon the ground; and I shall become even as a vegetable presently — having knowledge of nothing save the witchery of God in the eyes of women. The memory of Schopenhauer hath passed — and with its passing I find my only salvation in a return to the study of the Oceanic Majesty and Power and Greatness and Holiness and Omniscience of the mind of Herbert Spencer.

Be thou ever blessed and loved by the sons of men, even as by

HEARN

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

1889

GOULD, — You must have skipped, bad boy! — for the girl is *not* "all face and foot"! You missed the finely detailed account of her body in William's diary — and the just observation of a trait characteristic of the race in its purity; the great length of the lower limb — fine greyhounds, fine thoroughbred horses, and fine men and women have all this characteristic, like the conventional figures of antique gem-work. The gipsy-girl is possible: I have seen charming ones. You must read Borrow's "Gipsies" (the unabbreviated edition in two volumes) — also his "Bible in Spain," and "Lavengro" — a Gipsy novel. Simpson's "Gipsies" is also worth looking at. . . . But if you won't believe in the bird of passage, take Carmen and believe in her — there, at least, you will not doubt: all will prove in accordance with possible sin and sorrow. Why do you want the Bird's body to be better known — since nobody ever knew it any better than you know it; (or would know if you had read all) — could not have except by making to operate, like the Vicar of Azey-le-Rideau, all its "hinges and mesial partitions," even to disjuncture. What a singular fact in the history of torture, that the inquisitor was trained to believe the beautiful body he was breaking and rending and burning was *never beautiful* — that its grace and symmetry were illusions, the witchcraft of the dear

old compassionate Devil striving to save his victim by the mirage of fleshly attractiveness! Only through this belief could certain monstrosities have been possible. It was always Saint Anthony's temptation!

I have a book for you — an astounding book — a godlike book. But I want you to promise to read every single word of it. Every word is dynamic. It is the finest book on the East ever written; and though very small contains more than all my library of Oriental books. And an American (?) wrote it! It is called "The Soul of the Far East." It will astound you like Schopenhauer, the same profundity and lucidity. Love to you.

HEARN

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

1889

DEAR GOULD, — I blacked — that is, I had my boots blacked yesterday — just for the same reason that we do things after people are dead (which we would not have done for them while they lived and asked), with a ghostly idea of pleasing them. If you had been here I might not have had them blacked, but as you were gone, I did it for the Shadow of you. And I gave the boy twenty cents — because of the feeling that he might never have such a chance again. That boy runs after me now everywhere — but — he is mistaken! I am no longer the same! I have satisfied my conscience, and enjoy Nirvana.

This morning when I got up I thought the streets looked queer. It seemed as if they were lighted by the afternoon in some way or other, instead of the morning. I went to the P. O. with "The Soul of the Far East." How silent the streets for a Friday morning! The population seemed all to have ebbed away somewhere as if to look at something. The post-office was silent as a pyramid inside. I went to the book-store, and found it closed — and for the first time realized that it was Sunday. Then I understood why the streets looked like afternoon; and the sunshine had a tinge as of evening in a cemetery. Confound Sunday!

Talking with Jakey last night about Nature, I heard him express the opinion that his capacity of scientific realization of the *causes* of things was enough to account for the absence in him of any feeling of awe or reverence in the presence of mountain scenery. It occurred to me therewith that the characteristic of indifference to poetry might be almost common to mathematicians. The man who wrote "The Soul of the Far East" and "Chosön" is nevertheless an accomplished mathematician. But you will notice that his divine poetry touches only that which no scientific knowledge can explain — that which no mathematics can solve — that which must remain mysterious throughout all conceivable span of time — the fluttering of the Human Soul in its chrysalis, which it at once hates and loves, and hates because it loves, and strives to burst

through, and still fears unspeakably to break — though dimly conscious of the infinite Ghostly Peace beyond. HEARN

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

1889

DEAR GOULD, — I feel like a white granular mass of amorphous crystals — my formula appears to be isomeric with Spasmotoxin. My aurochloride precipitates into beautiful prismatic needles. My Platinochloride develops octohedron crystals — with a fine blue fluôrescence. My physiological action is not indifferent. One millionth of a grain injected under the skin of a frog produced instantaneous death accompanied by an orange blossom odour. The heart stopped in systole. A base — L_3 H_9 NG_4 — offers analogous reaction to phosmotinigstic acid. Yours with best regards

PHOSMOLYODIC LAFCADIO HEARN

GOULD — "Concerning zombis, tell me all about them."

HEARN — "In order to relate you that which you desire, it will be necessary first to explain the difference in the idea of the supernatural as existing in the savage and in the civilized mind. Now, I remember a very strange thing . . ."

GOULD — "I'll be back in a minute." (*Strides across the street.*)

Violent agitation in the peripheral centres of

Hearn, together with considerable acute anguish, owing to disintegration of cerebral tissue consequent upon the sudden arrest of nerve-force in discharge. (See Grant Allen on cause of pain, "Physiological Æsthetics.")

GOULD, suddenly reappearing — "Go on with that old story, now."

(Resurrection of cerebral agitation in the ganglionic centres and intercorrelate cerebral fibres of Hearn. After desperate and painful research, the broken threads of memories and impulses are found again, and peripherally conjointed, and the wounded narrative proceeds, limping grievously.)

HEARN — "As I was observing, I recollect one very curious instance of emotional and fantastic —"

GOULD — "Yes, I'll be out in a moment —" (*Disappears through a door.*)

— Brutal confusion established in the visual, auditory, gustatory, and olfactory ganglia of Hearn; — general quivering and strain of all the mnemonic current lines, and then a sense of inquisitorial torture going on in various brain-chambers, where the vital forces, suddenly arrested, flow back in a deluge and set all ideas afloat in drowning agony. Slow recovery as from concussion of the cerebellum.

ENTER GOULD — "Now proceed with that story of yours."

HEARN — pacifying the fury of the ganglionic centres with the most extreme possible difficulty, timidly observes —

"But you don't care to hear it?"

GOULD — moving with inconceivable rapidity, dynamically overcharged —

"Of course, I do: I'm just dying to hear it."

HEARN, running after him, skipping preliminaries in the anguish of "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick" —

"Well, it was in the Rue du Bois Morier — one of the steepest and strangest streets in the world, full of fantastic gables, and the shadows of —"

GOULD — "Yes, I'll be out in a minute." (*Vanishes through a shop entrance.*)

(Inexpressible chaos and bewilderment of impulses afferent and efferent — electrical collisions in the ganglia — unspeakable combustion of tissue in the intercorrelating fibres — paralysis of conflicting emotions — unutterable anguish: coma followed by acute mania in the person of Hearn.)

GOULD emerging — "Well, go on with that old yarn. . . ."

But Hearn is being already conveyed by two large Philadelphia Policemen to the Penn. Lunatic Asylum for Uncurables.

Astonishment of Gould.

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

1889

GOULD, — Just after I wrote you last night, something began to whiffle quite soundlessly round my head: I saw only a shadow, and I turned down the

gas — remembering that he who extinguisheth his light so that insects may not perish therein, shall, according to the book of Laotse, obtain longer life and remission of sins. Then it struck me with its wings so heavily that I knew it was a bat — for no bird could fly so silently; and I turned up the gas again — full. There it was! — very large — circling round and round the ceiling so swiftly that I felt dizzy trying to turn to keep it in sight — and as noiselessly as its own shadow above it. I could not tell which was the shadow and which the life — until both came together at last upon a ledge, and made a little peak-shouldered devilish thing with strangely twisted ears.

All at once I remembered an experience in Martinique one summer evening. We were at Grand Anse — friend Arnoux and I — supping in a little room opening over a low garden full of banana-trees, to the black beach of the sea; and the great Voice thundered so we could scarcely hear ourselves speak; and the candle in the verrine fluttered like something afraid. Then right over my head a bat began to circle, with never a sound. Arnoux exclaimed: "Mais, mon cher, regarde cette sacrée bête — ah — c'est drôle!" By the look of his face I knew drôle meant "weird." He struck it down with his napkin and it disappeared; but a moment later came back again, and flew around as before. Again he hit it and drove it away; but it always came flitting back. Then we all laughed; — and Pierre, the host, tick-

ling my ear with his beard, cried out — "C'est ta maîtresse à Saint-Pierre — elle est morte — elle vient te chercher." And I looked so serious that Arnoux burst into a laugh as loud as the surf outside.

Now when I saw that bat, I thought it was "weird" — drôle as the other. I even found myself wondering, Who it could be? I thought it might be Clemence, about whose death I received news in my last letter. I did not think for a moment it was Gould. Only some very poor simple soul would avail itself of so humble a vehicle for apparition. . . . Then it looked so much like something damned as it moved about, that I felt ashamed of thinking it could be Clemence — the best kind of old souls, Clemence! — My blanchisseuse. It was not easy to catch the bat without hurting it. I argued that if it was anybody I knew it could not be afraid of me. It sat on the mirror. It went under the table. It flattened under the trunk and feigned death. Then I caught it in my hat; and it revealed its plain nature by burying its teeth in my finger; and it would not let go — and it squeaked and chippered like a ghost. I was almost mad enough to hurt it, but I tried to caress its head, which felt soft and nice. But it showed all its teeth and looked too ugly, and there was a musky smell of hell about it — so that I knew, if it were anybody, the place with a capital "P" where it came from. I put it in a box. To-night I am going to let it go.

With love to you LAFCADIO HEARN

TO GEORGE M. GOULD

1889

My most dear Gould, — I am really quite lonesome for you, and am reflecting how much more lonesome I shall be in some outrageous equatorial country where I shall not see you any more; — also it seems to me perfectly and inexplainably atrocious to know that some day or other there will be no Gould at 119 South Seventeenth Street. That I should cease to make a shadow some day seems quite natural, because Hearn is only a bubble anyhow ("the earth hath bubbles") — but you, hating mysteries and seeing and feeling and knowing everything — you have no right ever to die at all. And I can't help doubting whether you will. You have almost made me believe what you do not believe yourself — that there are souls. I have n't any, I know; but I think you have — something electrical and luminous inside you that will walk about and see things always. Are you really — what I see of you — only an envelope of something subtler and perpetual? Because if you are, I might want you to pass down some day southward — over the blue zone and the volcanic peaks like a little wind — and flutter through the palm-plumes under the all-purifying sun — and reach down through old roots to the bones of me, and try to raise me up.

"Ruth" maketh progress; but I had to murder the "Mother of God." Anyhow the simile would

have had a Catholic idolatrousness about it, so that I don't regret it. — I send a clipping I found in the trunk, to make you laugh: the "Femmes Arabes" of Dr. Perron furnished me the facts. — Mrs. Gould moveth or reposeth in serenity — Jakey fulfilleth with becoming dignity the duties devolved upon him. I have consumed one plug of "Quaker City"; but as the smoke spires up, the spiritual-sensualism of "Ruth" becometh manifest.

There has been some rain almost worthy of the tropics — and much darkness. And I can understand better why the ancients of Yucatan, accustomed to the charm of real physical light (about which you Northerners know nothing), put no fire into their hell, but darkness only, as woe enough for tropical souls to bear!

I hope you are having a glorious, joyous journeying, and remain,

Lovingly yours

HEARN

TO ——

1889

I AM very sorry your trip was a chilly and rainy one. As for me, I have been shivering here, and have got to get South somewhere soon — if only till I can get back to the tropics. I am sorry to confess it; but the tropical Circe bewitches me again — I must go back to her.

I had such a queer dream last night. A great,

warm garden with high clipped hedges — much higher than a man — and a sort of pleasant country-house, with steps leading into the garden — and everywhere, even on the steps, hampers and baskets. Krehbiel was there — he told me he was going to Europe never to come back. And you were there, too, all in black silk — sheathed in it; you were also going away somewhere; and I was packing for you, getting things ready. Everybody was saying nice things: one did not seem to hear — really one never hears voices in dreams — but one feels the words, tones and all, as if they passed unspoken — just the soul or will of them only — out of one brain into another. I can't remember what anybody said precisely: what I recollect best is the sensation that everybody was going, and that I was to stay all alone in the place, or anywhere I pleased; and it was getting dark. Then I woke up, and said: "Well, I really must see her." I suppose dreams mean nothing: but interpreted by the contrary, as is a custom, it would mean the reverse — that I am going away somewhere — which I don't yet know.

Always and in all things yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. Oh! — you spoke about Philadelphia.... Is it possible you have never seen it? Is it possible you have never seen Fairmount Park? Believe me, then, that it is the most beautiful place of the whole civilized world on any sunny, tepid summer day.

TO ——

Your Central Park is a cabbage-garden by comparison: F. Pk. is fifteen miles long, by about eight or ten broad. But the size is nothing. It is the beauty of the woods and their vistas, the long drives by the river, the glimpse of statuary and fountains from delightful terraces, the knolls commanding the whole circle of the horizon, the vast garden and lawn spaces, the shadowed alleys where 100,000 people make scarcely any more sound than a swarm of bees — and over it all such a soft, sweet dreamy light. (When you go to see it, be sure to choose a sunny, *warm* day.) Thousands of thousands of carriages file by, each with a pair of lovers in it. Everybody in the park seems to be making love to somebody. Love is so much the atmosphere of the place — a part of the light and calm and perfume — that you feel as if drenched with it, permeated by it, mesmerized. And if you are all alone, you will look about you once in a while, wondering that somebody else is not beside you. . . . But I forgot that I am not writing to a stupid man, like myself.

L. H.

TO ——

NEW YORK, *November*, 1889

OH! you splendid girl! — will it really give you some short pleasure to see this old humbug's writing again? . . . I was very sorry not to have been able to see you: I should have wished to be able to give you a few bits of advice about precautions to take during

the tropical part of your trip. But I have faith in your superb constitution and youth — and trust this will reach eyes undimmed by fever, and brightened more than ever by the glow of all the strange suns that will have shone upon you.

So that is my dream that I wrote you about: it was you, not I, that were to run away. But I did not help you to do your packing, as I imagined.

I wonder if you went away in black silk, or black cashmere: I dreamed of you all in black that time. And when I saw the charming notice about you in the "Tribune," there suddenly came back to me the same vague sense of unhappiness I had dreamed of feeling — an absurd sense of absolute loneliness.

For seldom as I saw you, I must tell you that I looked forward to such visits as to something very delightful, that helped me to forget the great iron-whirling world and everything in it but yourself. You made a little circle of magnetic sunshine for me; and you know I liked to bask in it so much that I used to be quite selfish about it. I feel now as though, each night I sat up so late in your little parlour, I was taking from you so much rest — which means life and strength — acted, in short, the part of a psychical cannibal! And I am remorseful at not being able to feel more remorseful than I do; it was so nice to be there that I can't be properly sorry, as I should.

I and my friends have been wagering upon you, hoping for you, praying for you to win your race —

so that every one may admire you still more, and your name be flashed round the world quicker than the sunshine, and your portrait — in spite of you — appear in some French journal where they know how to engrave portraits properly. I thought I might be able to coax one from you; but as you never are the same person two minutes in succession, I am partly consoled: it could only be one small phase of you — Proteus, Circe, Undine, Djineeyeh!

— And you found the loose bar at last, and shook it out, and flew! I much doubt if they will ever get you well into the cage again — that was so irksome to you. But perhaps the world itself will seem a cage to you hereafter: — it will have grown so much smaller in that blue-flashing circuit of yours about it. Perhaps when human society shall have become infinitely more fluid and electric than at present — which it is sure to do with the expansion and increasing complexity of intercommunication by steam and wire — this little half-dead planet will seem too small to mankind. One will feel upon it, in the light of a larger knowledge, constrained almost as much as Simon on the top of his pillar — and long, like him, for birth into a larger mode of being. Even now there is no more fleeing into strange countries — because there are no strange countries: everything is being interbound and interspersed with steel rails and lightning wires; — there are no more mysteries — except what are called hearts, those points at which individualities rarely touch

each other, only to feel as sudden a thrill of surprise as at meeting a ghost, and then to wonder in vain, for the rest of life, what lies out of soul-sight.

— Did you often wish to stop somewhere, and feel hearts beating about you, and see the faces of gods and dancing-girls? Or were you petted like the "Lady of the Aroostook" by officers and crew — and British dignitaries eager to win one Circe-smile — and superb Indian Colonels of princely houses returning home — that you had no chance to regret anything? I have been so afraid of never seeing you again, that I have been hating splendid imaginary foreigners in dreams — which would have been quite wickedly selfish if I had been awake! . . .

With every true good wish and sincere affection,

Your friend

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ——

March 7–8, 1890

I MUST write you a line or two, before I finish packing — though it is the hour of ghosts, when writing is a grave imprudence. Something makes me write you nevertheless.

I could not go to see Mr. M —— : there was too much ice and snow. But you can forgive *that.*

I shall be very sorry not to see you again — and this time, you are not sorry to know I am going away as you were when I went South. Perhaps you are quite right. . . .

TO ——

— But that is nothing. What I want to say is, that after looking at your portrait, I must tell you how sweet and infinitely good you . . . can be, and how much I like you, and how I like you — or at least *some* of those many who are one in you.

I might say love you — as we love those who are dead (the dead who still shape lives); — but which, or how many, of you I cannot say. One looks at me from your picture; but I have seen others, equally pleasing and less mysterious.

. . . Not when you were in evening dress, because you were then too beautiful; and what is thus beautiful is not that which is most charming in you. It only dazzles one, and constrains. . . . I like you best in the simple dark dress, when I can forget everything except all the souls of you. Turn by turn one or other floats up from the depth within and rushes to your face and transfigures it; — and that one which made you smile with pleasure like a child at something pretty we were both admiring is simply divine. . . . I do not think you really know how sacred you are; and yet you ought to know: it is because you do not know what is in you, *who* are in you, that you say such strangely material things. And you yourself, by being, utterly contradict them all.

It seems to me that all those mysterious lives within you — all the Me's that were — keep asking the Me that is, for something always refused; — that you keep saying to them: "But you are dead

and cannot see — you can only feel; and *I* can see — and I will not open to you, because the world is all changed. You would not know it, and you would be angry with me were I to grant your wish. Go to your places, and sleep and wait and leave me in peace with myself." But they continue to wake up betimes, and quiver into momentary visibility to make you divine in spite of yourself — and as suddenly flit away again. I wish one would come — and stay: the one I saw that night when we were looking at . . . what was it?

Really, I can't remember what it was: the smile effaced the memory of it — just as a sun-ray blots the image from a dry-plate suddenly exposed. There was such a child-beauty in that smile. . . . Will you ever be *like that always* for any one being?

— I hope you will get my book before you go: it will be sent you Tuesday at latest, I think. I don't know whether you will like the paper; but you will only look for the "gnat of a soul" that belongs to me between the leaves.

— Forgive all my horrid ways, my dear, sweet, ghostly sister.

Good-bye LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

1890

DEAR ELIZABETH, — . . . I feel indescribably toward Japan. Of course Nature here is not the Nature of the tropics, which is so splendid and savage and

omnipotently beautiful that I feel at this very moment of writing the same pain in my heart I felt when leaving Martinique. This is a domesticated Nature, which loves man, and makes itself beautiful for him in a quiet grey-and-blue way like the Japanese women, and the trees seem to know what people say about them — seem to have little human souls. What I love in Japan is the Japanese — the poor simple humanity of the country. It is divine. There is nothing in this world approaching the naïve natural charm of them. No book ever written has reflected it. And I love their gods, their customs, their dress, their bird-like quavering songs, their houses, their superstitions, their faults. And I believe that their art is as far in advance of our art as old Greek art was superior to that of the earliest European art-gropings — I think there is more art in a print by Hokusai or those who came after him than in a $10,000 painting — no, a $100,000 painting. *We* are barbarians! I do not merely *think* these things: I am as sure of them as of death. I only wish I could be reincarnated in some little Japanese baby, so that I could see and feel the world as beautifully as a Japanese brain does.

And, of course, I am studying Buddhism with heart and soul. A young student from one of the temples is my companion. If I stay in Japan, we shall live together. — Will write again if all goes well.

My best love to you always.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

1890

DEAR MISS BISLAND, — Do you think well enough of me to try to get me employment at a regular salary, somewhere in the United States? I have permanently broken off with the Harpers: I am starved out. My average earnings for the last three years have been scarcely five hundred dollars a year.

Here in Japan prices are higher than in New York — unless one can become a Japanese employee. I was promised a situation; but it is now delayed until September.

I shall get along somehow. But I am so very tired of being hard-pushed, and ignored, and starved — and obliged to undergo moral humiliations which are much worse than hunger or cold — that I have ceased to be ashamed to ask you to say a good word for me where you can, to some newspaper, or some publishing firm, able to give me steady employ, later on.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELIZABETH BISLAND

1890

MY DEAR SISTER ELIZABETH, — . . . Now, as for myself — I am going to become country schoolmaster in Japan — probably for several long years. The language is unspeakably difficult to learn; — I

believe it can only be learned by ear. Teaching will help me to learn it; and before learning it, to write anything enduring upon Japan would be absurdly impossible. Literary work will not support one here, where living costs quite as much as in New York. What I wish to do, I want to do for its own sake; and so intend to settle, if possible, in this country, among a people who seem to me the most lovable in the world.

I have been living in temples and old Buddhist cemeteries, making pilgrimages and sounding enormous bells and worshipping astounding Buddhas. Still, I do not as yet know anything whatever about Japan. I have nothing else worth telling you to write just now, and no address to give — as I do not know where I am going or what I shall be doing next month.

Later on, I shall write again.

Best wishes and affection from

L. H.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KIZUKI, *July*, 1890

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — I am writing to you from the little beach of Inasa, mentioned in the "Kojiki" — the etymology of which name, as given by Hirata, I think you say is incorrect, or at least fantastic. But I think you may not know that Inasa beach is in some respects the nicest bathing-place imaginable — certainly by far the best I have

ever visited in Japan. The hotels face a beach without a pebble in its sand, and when the water is not rough, it is clear as a diamond; when roughened by a west wind, however, the water sometimes becomes dirty with seaweed, drift and such refuse. This is the great bathing resort of Izumo. But it is much more quiet and pleasant than other Japanese bathing resorts I have seen — such as Ōiso. After the bath, moreover, one can have a hot salt water bath or a cold fresh-water douche. And there is plenty of deep water for swimming. Right opposite our window is the "thousand draught rock" which the son of Ohokuni, etc., lifted on the tips of his fingers.

Kaka is famous for its sea cave, and legend of Jizō. I think I wrote you of this beautiful legend of the child ghosts and the fountain of milk. But it is really too pretty to publish in a matter-of-fact record.

The term "arrows of prayer" which I use, might deceive the reader. The arrows put into the rice-fields to scare away crows are very different in appearance and purpose. I hope to send you some of the former from Mionoseki.

I will stay here some weeks — the sea-bathing is too good to lose.

Will write again soon.

Most truly ever

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KIZUKI, *July*, 1890

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — We are still at Kizuki — enjoying exquisite weather and delicious sea-bathing. Last evening I dined with the Kokuzō; and I never ate so much dinner or drank so much sake anywhere in Japan. It was a royal feast. I also saw some things that would interest you. A series of letters of Motoori's — also two MSS. of flute-music made by him, and the brushes with which his commentaries were written. One of the Senke family, who was his pupil, received these as bequests, and they are preserved in the family.

The conversation turned upon you; and I was asked many questions about you, which I answered as best I could. From the extreme interest shown, I am sure that Kizuki would be turned inside out to please you if you come down here.

I asked about the deity of Mionoseki; and the learned priest Sasa and others state positively that deity is not Hiruko. The legend concerning him would prove the same fact. The deity detested the cock, and no hens or chickens or eggs or feathers are allowed to exist in Mionoseki. No vessel would take an egg to Mionoseki. It is wrong even to eat eggs the day before going to Mionoseki. A passenger to Mionoseki was once detected smoking a pipe which had the figure of a cock upon it, and that pipe was immediately thrown into the sea. The dislike of the

god for the cock is attributed to some adventure of his youthful days — when the cock had been instructed to wake him up, or call him at a certain hour. The cock did not perform his duty, and Koto-shiro-nushi-no-Kami, had his hand bitten by a crocodile in hurrying to get back home.

There is a temple of Ebisu in Nishinomiya near Ōsaka, where the deity is believed to be identical with Hiruko, but this is not the case at Mionoseki.

Regarding the Deity of Marriage, I must correct an error in my last. The learned priest Sasa states (quoting many ancient poems and authors to prove the fact) that the ancient Deity of Marriage was the Deity of Kizuki. But at Yaegaki Jinja, where there is a tree with two trunks, or two trees with trunks grown into one, and other curious symbolic things, the popular worship of the Deities Susa-no-o and Inada-Hime gradually centred and finally wrested away the rights and privileges of the Kizuki deity in favour of the gods of Yaegaki.

I have had some fine shōryō-bune made. And I can send you one if you would like. There is a special kind of shōryō-bune made here. Mine, though of straw, is an elaborate model of a junk and could sail for miles. Would you like to send one to Dr. Tylor? Anthropologically, these little boats in which to send the souls home have a rare interest.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *September*, 1890

DEAR PROFESSOR, — I have just returned from my first really great Japanese experience — a trip to Kizuki. The two trips were beautiful. From Shōbara the route lies through a superb plain of rice fields, with mountain ranges closing the horizon to left and right.

Reaching Kizuki at night, I sent a letter of introduction from Mr. Nishida of the Chūgakkō to Senke Takamori — the princely person whose family for eighty-two generations have been in charge of the great temple. I paid a visit to the grounds the same evening, and was amazed by the great scale and dignity of the buildings, and the nobility of the approaches to them, under succession of colossal torii.

Next morning a messenger came from Mr. Senke, announcing that I would be received at the temple. My attendant had, however, to put on hakamas and perform other personal corrections of dress before entering the august presence.

We were then received with a courtesy and kindness impossible to praise sufficiently or to qualify too gratefully. After performing the requisite ablution of hands, we were received into the inner shrine of the chief deity (my baggage not yet having arrived, I have not your "Kojiki" by me to correct misspelling, but I think the name is Ōnamuji-no-Mikoto). I was told that I was the first European

ever allowed to enter the shrine, though seven or eight other foreigners had visited the grounds.

There are some nineteen shrines not consecrated to any particular deities — in which the Kami are supposed to assemble during the Kami-ari-zuki — after a preliminary visit to a much smaller temple erected on the seashore — where, it is said, the sovereignty of Izumo was first divinely guaranteed by the great deity.

We were received by the Gūji (Senke) in ceremonial costumes. His robes were white, those of the attendant priests purple with gold figuring — very beautiful. I acknowledge that I felt considerable awe in the presence of these superb Japanese, who realized for me all that I had imagined about the daimyōs, and grandees of the past. He who used to be called the Iki-gami — said to descend from Susa-no-o-no-Mikoto — is a fine portly man, with a full beard. The ceremonial was imposing, and the sense of the immense antiquity and dignity of the cult, and of the generations of its officiants, might have impressed even a more unbelieving mind than my own.

The temple is really very noble, with its huge pillars, and the solidity of its vast beamwork. Since the prehistoric era it has been rebuilt twenty-eight times. It is said to be the oldest of all Shintō places of worship, and holier than Ise. There are many curiosities and valuable historical documents. The chief shrine faces west — unlike others.

We were shown the primitive method of lighting the sacred fire — a simple board in holes of which a rapidly revolving stick kindles the spark. Also we saw the hierophantic dance, and heard the strange old song sung — An-un — to the accompaniment of sticks tapped on curiously shaped wooden boxes, or drums.

Subsequently we were invited to the house of Mr. Senke, where other curious things were shown to us. I have had a rare and delightful experience, and I hope to write of it for one of the English reviews later on.

My attendant — unwarrantably, perhaps — mentioned me as a friend of yours; and the statement provoked a murmur of pleasure. Your name is held, I can assure you, in very great reverence at Kizuki; and I feel assured, should you go there, that you would be received as if you were the chief of the Kami. And I am also sure you would like these really fine and noble men.

I have written enough to tire you perhaps, but I believe the subject may, at least, suggest questions of value from you, if not otherwise interesting. Kizuki is certainly the chief place of interest in Izumo; and I have all details and documents. They will take me some months to digest, but I shall do something pretty.

The jinrikisha ride is a little tiring. Kizuki is very, very pretty. From 200,000 to 250,000 pilgrims go there yearly. All day the sound of the clapping of

hands is unbroken, like the sound of a cataract. At least it was when I was there.

Best regards to you.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *September*, 1890

DEAR PROFESSOR, — On second thought I have set to work to obtain the information you wish as fully as possible from trustworthy Japanese — as I fear it could only be gathered by my own exertions alone, too late to be serviceable. I shall send as soon as possible, and if there be time I will supplement the notes with some observations of my own.

I think I shall be very happy in Matsue, and every one assures me it is not so cold as in Tōkyō in winter, although there is more snow.

On the way here I stopped at a very primitive village where there are volcanic springs, and nearly every house has a "natural bathtub" always hot and fresh. And the good old man in whose house I stopped said he only once before in all his life saw a European — but he did not know whether the European was a man or a woman. The European had very long hair, of a curious colour, and wore a long dress reaching its feet, and its manners were gentle and kind. I found out afterwards it was a Norwegian missionary-girl, having the courage to travel alone.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *October*, 1890

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — I received your last kind letter just after having posted a note to you. As for what information I could send, I am surprised and delighted to find that it was of some use. I never expected to be so kindly thanked for it — deeming it too scanty.

I do not think I shall have any difficulty in getting a model made of the fire-drill, which at Kizuki is a thick board of dense white wood, all the holes being drilled near one edge, in an almost parallel line. Perhaps it may take some little time to arrange the matter; but if there be no hurry, I am almost certain I can get the model made. I am a member of the society now for the preservation of the Kizuki buildings, and am sure my request will be kindly considered.

There are coloured prints here enough: Samurai-no-ehon they call the old picture-books here. But they do not relate to Izumo. I hope to procure some soon which will do.

I am more and more impressed with the ascendency of Shintō here. Everybody is a Shintōist; and every house seems to have both its kamidana and its butsudan. One street is almost entirely composed of Buddhist temples — the Teramachi; but all the worshippers also attend the Shintō services on certain days. The charms suspended over doors,

etc., are Shintō. Most of the mamori on the kamidana of a house are sure to be Shintō. The Gods (1) Ebisu and (2) Daikoku, here respectively identified with (1) Koto-shiro-nushi-no Kami and (2) Oho-kuni-nushi-no-Kami, are monopolized by Shintō. Its signs and mysteries are everywhere: the atmosphere is full of magic.

I suppose some people would think this sort of worship shocking, but I must say I could not laugh at it: the childish naïveté of the prayers and the offerings — the idea of a kami in the tree, able to heal — seemed to me rather touching than absurd, and delightfully natural. One feels what pastoral life in the antique world must have been, on studying the artless notions of these good country-folk, whom no one could live among without loving — unless he were strangely brutal or bigoted.

I had to make a speech before the educational association of Izumo the other day, and in citing the labours of Darwin, Lubbock, Huxley, and others, I quoted also Tylor's delightful little book on Anthropology. My speech was on the Value of the Imagination as a Factor in Education. The Governor ordered it to be translated and printed; — so that I am being for the moment perhaps much more highly considered than I ought to be.

I have become so accustomed to Japanese food and habits, that it would now be painful to me to change them. The only extras, besides sake, which

I take, are plenty of fried and raw eggs. So far I am in better health than I hoped to be in Japan.

I am very sorry you are not quite well. Here the weather is what they call "mad weather" — rain alternating with sun, and chilly winds.

With best regards

Faithfully yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

November, 1890

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — You will remember having invited humble me to make a few criticisms if I could, about "Things Japanese." I am now going to pray you with all my heart and soul to change that article about Japanese Music in the next edition of the book. I am, and have been for months unspeakably charmed with Japanese music — I think it is as dainty and playfully sweet and pretty as the Japanese girls who sing it and play it; and I feel sure there is a very fine subtle art-feeling in it. I am sorry to say, however, that while making this plea, I must in honesty confess that I am not an appreciant of Wagner, and that I have always been much impressed and charmed by primitive music. African music, and Spanish-American melodies I am quite infatuated about, and neither of these would be considered as related to the higher musical sense. But I feel sure if you were in Izumo, I could make you hear some music, both instrumental and vocal,

which you would acknowledge to be more than "pretty."

I think I will be able to get a model of the fire-drill made in a while. I have arranged for a week at Kizuki during the coming vacation.

The importance of Shintō here as compared with Buddhism impresses me more and more every day. Most of the kakemono in the tokonomas are Shintō rather than Buddhist. The story of the Sun-goddess is a favourite theme with local artists. Here also the gods of Good-Fortune have become after a fashion adopted by Shintō.

I expect to send you some mamori shortly from two places — Ichibata and Sakusa. The Shintō shrine at Sakusa would probably interest you. Lovers in doubt go there to pray to the kami who set the single in family, and who have decided in advance the coupling of all human creatures. In this shrine are the spirits of Susa-no-o-no-Mikoto and his wife enshrined — his first wife whom he met accompanied by her father before he went to kill the Serpent. The ghost of the father-in-law, "Foot-stroking Elder," is supposed to reside in the same place — also that of the mother-in-law. Almost every spot in hill or valley here has a shrine marking an act or footstep of Susa-no-o. Every place where the Serpent (Orochi) could possibly have been, still holds a legend of it.

I am no longer in a hotel, but have a very beautiful house, fronting on the lake, and from my window

The School where Hearn taught in Matsue

I could see with a telescope almost to Kizuki over a beautiful stretch of blue water. And every peak I see has some divine story attached to it, and several are named after the primæval gods.

I am perfectly treated here, and would be very, very happy if I had only a little more time to work. It is now a busy season. The examinations have come upon me; and I interrupted this letter twice before sending it, in order to get some examination papers done. I have twelve large classes to examine and give marks to on Dictation, Reading, Composition, and Conversation. But now the trouble is over, and I shall have plenty of time to write again.

Hoping you will excuse silence, I am always

Sincerely yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

I enclose a few mamori of Kishibojin — the Sanscrit Harite — to whom wives pray for children. I suppose you know more about her worship than I do. But in the Northern temples of her the votive offerings of children dresses are large dresses. Here the dresses are only models of dresses — doll size. The pregnant woman picks one out of a thousand, keeping her eyes shut. When she looks, if she has picked out a girl's dress, she is sure the child in her womb is a boy! — and vice versa. When the child is born she makes another dress and brings it to the temple. I am very fond of Kishibojin, and I think her worship beautiful.

Verily I have become quite as much of an idolater as any of these.

L. H.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, 1890

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — I returned last Sunday from Ichibata, but was too tired and busy to write at once. I have already sent you some mamori from the famed temple of Yakushi Nyorai.

The little steamer — the very smallest I ever saw — which carries pilgrims and others from Matsue to Kozakai — makes the trip to the latter village in about two hours. Then the task of climbing the mountain is not over-easy. The scenery, however, both on the lake and at Ichibata is grand, and the peaks of the ranges have all their legends. There are nearly six hundred steps of stone to climb before the temple — situated on a windy summit whence the view extends for many luminous miles. The temple is new — the ancient one having been destroyed by fire. There is a large hotel where guests are entertained upon a strictly Buddhist diet — no fish, no eggs; but a little cheap sake is tolerated. No girls — only young men as servants and waiters. The priests made some demonstrations at my appearance in their courts; but a few words from the pilgrims with me settled me in their good opinions, and they became kind, and showed me their kakemonos of the Great Physician. All afflicted with eye-troubles

journey here and pray — repeating always the same prayer according to long established usage — "On koro-koro Sendai," etc. Little water vessels are sold bearing the mon of the temple, and these are filled from the temple spring, and the sick bathe their eyes therewith. The trip was altogether a very charming one for me, and not the less interesting because I had to get back to Matsue in a sampan.

I am becoming a good pilgrim.

I do not think I am the first European to visit Ichibata, however: there were some German naval officers here, according to tradition, eight or ten years ago.

With best regards, always yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

MATSUE, 1890

DEAR MR. NISHIDA, — . . . Last evening, the servant of Governor Koteda came to the house with a curious-looking box, which contained a present from Miss Koteda — an aguisu: the bird which sings "Hokkekyō," and ought, therefore, for its piety, according to the sutra of the good law, to be endowed with six hundred good qualities of Eye, six hundred good qualities of Hearing, twelve hundred good qualities of Smelling power, and twelve hundred supernatural excellences of the tongue, or of Speech. I am almost ready to believe the last compensation has been given it — for its voice is super-

latively sweet. — But what to say or do in the way of thanking the giver I don't know: this is really too kind.

So yesterday, despite the hideous weather, was a fortunate day: it brought to my house the sacred bird and your delightful postal news; — and for all things my grateful thanks and best wishes.

Most faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO YRJÖ HIRN

TŌKYŌ, *December*, 1890

DEAR PROFESSOR, — I have just finished the reading of your "Origins of Art." . . . Some years ago I remember that I wanted very much to produce an ideal essay upon the "ghostliness" of fine art — the element of *thrill* common to all forms of it: painting, sculpture, music, or architecture. The notion is not original, I suppose — but it came to me with such an intensity that I imagined a general truth behind it. This was the possible fact that no existing æsthetic sentiment had a primarily æsthetic origin, and that all such sentiment must simply represent emotional accumulation — organic memory or inherited tendency. But I could not develop my notion judiciously. Your fine book shows me how such things should have been done, and it expresses convictions and ideas which I lacked the scientific training to utter consistently.

I found a particular satisfaction in your critique of

the Darwinian hypothesis as to sexual æsthetic sensibility in animals and birds. Though I am an "extreme" evolutionist, this hypothesis always seemed to me essentially wrong — essentially opposed to the facts of psychical evolution. You have more than convinced me of what I suspected. Also I think that, even while occasionally diverging from Spencer's views, you have reënforced his main positions, and shed fresh light upon various shadowy regions of the new psychology. I liked very much your treatment of the difficult topic of pleasure-pain: indeed, I like the whole book more than I feel able to tell you.

My own slight knowledge of these matters is based chiefly upon a study of Spencer. Although I have played "æsthetically" with metaphysical ideas in my books, I believe that I have a fair knowledge of the whole system of Synthetic Philosophy, and that I may call myself a disciple of its author. Therefore — or rather by reason of this private study only — can I presume even to discuss your work as an admirer. You place the study of æsthetics upon a purely natural and common-sense basis, even while considering its multiple aspects; and I am persuaded that this must be the system of the future. Psycho-physics and psycho-dynamics have of late years been applied to æsthetic problems with the naked result of leaving the main question exactly where it was before, or of landing the student in a cul-de-sac; and I imagine that much intellectual

labour has been wasted in such paths merely through cowardice of conventions. It is a delight to meet with a book like this, in which science quietly ignores cant, and opens a new clearing through the blinding maze of mediæval cobwebs. Again, I must say that a more lucid, strong, and pleasing style I have not found in any modern work on æsthetics.

I want, however, to make a small protest about the second paragraph on page 233. Perhaps in the second edition you might think it worth your while to modify the statement as to the "gross" character of Japanese dancing. I should question the fairness of classing together — except as to probable emotional origins — Asiatic and African dances (i.e., *negro* dances). But I shall speak of the Japanese dances only. To make any general statement about anything Japanese is always risky; for customs here (differing in every province and every period) exhibit a most bewildering variety. It is not correct to say that the dancing is performed by "outcast women" mostly; for there are many respectable forms of dancing. The maiko is not perhaps a very respectable person; — but the miko, or Shintō priestesses (daughters of priests), certainly are worthy of all respect. Well, there are the temple-dances, before the old gods — the dances of children at the temples upon holidays — the dances of the peasants, etc., etc. None of these could be called gross — however amorous their origin. Men dance as well as women: all children dance; and in some

conservative provinces dancing is a part of female education. To come back to the maiko or geisha, however, let me assure you that although some of their dances may be passionally mimetic, even the passionate acting could not be termed "gross" with justice: on the contrary it is a very delicate bit of refined acting — acting of eyes and lips and hands — which requires a sharp eye to follow. There are in Japan, as everywhere else, dances that would not bear severe moral criticism; but the fine forms of Oriental dancing are really dramatic performances — silent monologues of a most artistic kind. — Perhaps you will be interested in a book which an acquaintance of mine, Mr. Osman Edwards, is bringing out through Mr. Heinemann of London, "The Theatre in Japan." The fact of the old lyric drama seems to me to call for a modification of the statement on page 233. Of course I am not questioning the suggestion of origins.

Excuse these hasty and insufficient expressions of appreciation. Now to the question of a former letter received from you, on the subject of a selection of papers translated from various books of mine, by Mrs. Hirn.

You have my full consent to publish such a translation. . . . I should certainly accept no pay either from translator or publisher; and a single copy of such translation, when published, would be favour enough. . . .

On the subject of a photograph and biographical

notice, however, will you not excuse me for saying that I do not think the circumstances justify such an introduction to a strange public? . . .

With renewed thanks for your most precious book, believe me, dear Professor, very sincerely yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *January*, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — I am sorry not to have heard from you — fearing you may have been ill. The weather here has become something very disagreeable — I was going to say infernal; but I think this word better describes the weather of the North Atlantic Coast. The changes of temperature here are less extreme, the cold is milder, but the temperature may change three times in twenty-four hours — which seems to me extraordinary. There is almost perpetual rain and gloom, and I would almost dislike Izumo were it not that one lovely day in a month is enough to make me forgive and forget all the bad weather. The "Izumo Fuji" — Dai sen (which is not, however, in Izumo at all) — was beautifully visible the day before yesterday, and the landscape was unspeakably beautiful.

I am now arranging, as best I can, to get the fire-drill model made in Kizuki. My friends have been ill and my best friend, Mr. Nishida, is still so ill that he cannot travel with me. But I think the drill can

be made very soon now. I have a passport for all Izumo; but the weather is diabolical; and though my chest is very strong, I feel that it is a severe strain to keep well even at home. So I shall not travel much before the summer.

I send you some clean new "fire-insurance mamori." I found out only two weeks ago where they are sold — at the great Inari temple in the grounds of Matsue Castle, where there are enormous stone foxes, and perhaps two thousand small foxes sitting all round the court with their tails perpendicularly elevated. The most extraordinary thing of the kind I ever saw. They showed me at the temple a kakemono of a ghostly fox, with a phosphoric jewel in its tail — said to have been painted ages ago. I think I shall buy it from them. It is not beautiful, but quite curious.

I wish you a very, very happy new year and many of them.

Faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MAISUE, *January*, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — Your kindness in sending me a postal card while suffering so much yourself from sickness, is something that touches me very much. I hope to thank you better later on.

I myself am very sick. I boasted too soon about my immunity from cold. I have been severely

touched where I thought myself strongest — in my lungs — and have passed some weeks in bed. My first serious discouragement came with this check to my enthusiasm; I fear a few more winters of this kind will put me underground. But this has been a very exceptional winter, they say. The first snow-storm piled five feet of snow about my house, which faces the lake, looking to Kizuki. All the mountains are white, and the country is smothered with snow, and the wind is very severe. I never saw a heavier snowfall in the United States or Canada. The thermometer does not go so low as you might suppose, not more than about twelve above zero; but the houses are cold as cattle barns, and the hibachi and the kotatsu are mere shadows of heat — ghosts, illusions. But I have the blues now; perhaps to-morrow everything will be cheerful again. The authorities are astonishingly kind to me. If they were not, I do not know what I should do.

I trust you are now strong again. I send you a few mamori from the famous shrine of Sakusa (county I-yu) where Yaegaki-san are worshipped, the "Deities who couple and set the single in families." It is said that these, so soon as a boy or girl is born, decide the future love and marriage of the child — betrothing all to all from the moment of birth. Three Shintō deities are the presiding gods: Susa-no-o-no-Mikoto, his wife Inada-Hime-no-Mikoto, and their son Sakusa-no-Mikoto, from whom, I suppose, the place takes its name. The mother

of Inada-Hime and Taka o gami-no-Mikoto, and Ama-terasu-Omi-Kami, are also there enshrined.

Here, amid stone foxes and stone lions, a priest sells love-charms. Some of these consist of the leaves of *Camellia Japonica.*

There is a tree in the temple court (or rather two trees, which have grown into one); this is considered both symbolical and magical. There is also a pond in which newts live. The flesh of these newts, reduced to ashes, is considered an efficacious aphrodisiac. It is also the custom for lovers to throw offerings wrapped in bits of white paper into the pond, and watch. If the newts at once run to it, the omen is good; if they neglect it, it is bad.

In the Middle Ages this temple used to be in the village of Ushio, on the boundary of the counties of O hara and Ni ta, but was removed to its present site many hundred years ago. There are curious traditions and poems, mostly of an erotic character, regarding this shrine.

Trusting you will soon be quite well, believe me always sincerely yours,

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *April*, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — I am delighted to hear the fire-drill is at last in your hands.

About Shintō . . . Of course, as far as its philosophy is concerned (which I am very fond of, in

spite of my devotion to Herbert Spencer), and romance of religious sentiment, and legends, and art — my Izumo experiences have not at all changed my love of Buddhism. If it were possible for me to adopt a faith, I should adopt it. But Shintō seems to me like an occult force — vast, extraordinary — which has not been seriously taken into account as a force. I think it is the hopeless, irrefragable obstacle to the Christianization of Japan (for which reason I am wicked enough to love it). It is not all a belief, nor all a religion; it is a thing formless as a magnetism and indefinable as an ancestral impulse. It is part of the Soul of the Race. It means all the loyalty of the nation to its sovereigns, the devotion of retainers to princes, the respect to sacred things, the conservation of principles, the whole of what an Englishman would call sense of duty; but that this sense seems to be hereditary and inborn. I think a baby is Shintō from the time its eyes can see. Here, too, the symbolism of Shintō is among the very first things the child sees (I suppose it is the same in Tōkyō). The toys are to a great extent Shintō toys; and the excursions of a young mother with a baby on her back are always to Shintō temples. How much of Confucianism may have entered into and blended with what is a striking characteristic of Japanese boys in their attitude toward teachers and superiors, I do not know; but I think that what is now most pleasing in these boys is the outer reflection of the spirit of Shintō within them — the hereditary spirit of it.

The Shinshū sect is the only one, as far as I can learn, whose members in Izumo are not also Shintōists; but the sect is very weak here. Even the Nichirenites are Shintōists. The two religions are so perfectly blended here that the lines of demarcation are sometimes impossible to find.

Well, I think we Occidentals have yet to learn the worship of ancestors; and evolution is going to teach it to us. When we become conscious that we owe whatever is wise or good or strong or beautiful in each one of us, not to one particular inner individuality, but to the struggles and sufferings and experiences of the whole unknown chain of human lives behind us, reaching back into mystery unthinkable — the worship of ancestors seems an extremely righteous thing. What is it, philosophically, but a tribute of gratitude to the past — dead relatively only — alive really within us, and about us.

With best regards, in momentary haste

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *May*, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — I have just returned from a pilgrimage to the famous Kwannon temple of Kiyomizu — about eighteen miles from Matsue — where it is said that the sacred fire has never been extinguished for a thousand years, to find your postal card. I do not wait to receive the delightful gift in order to thank you for it; as I hope

to have the pleasure of writing you a letter on my impression of it after reading it. You could have imagined nothing to send me more welcome. Mr. Lowell has, I think, no warmer admirer in the world than myself, though I do not agree with his theory in the "Soul of the Far East," and think he has ignored the most essential and astonishing quality of the race: its genius of eclecticism. The future holds many problems we cannot presume to guess, in regard to the fate of races. But there is not wanting foundation for the belief that the Orient may yet dominate the Occident and absorb it utterly. China seems to many a far greater question than Russia.

About your kind question regarding books. I think I shall be able to get all the books on Japan — in English — that I need; and your "Things Japanese" is a mine of good advice on what to buy. But if I need counsel which I cannot find in your book, then I will write and ask.

I venture to say that I think you have underrated the importance of my suggestion about the Sacred Snake — of which I have not been able to find the scientific name. If they have such a snake at Ise then I am wrong. But, if not, I think the little snake would be worth having. It does not — like the fire-drill of Kizuki — possess special interest for the anthropologist; but it certainly should have interest for the folk-lorist, as a chapter in one of the most ancient and widely spread (if not universal) religious

practices — the worship of the Serpent. If you ever want an enshrined snake, let me know. It is dried and put into a little miya for the kamidana.

Speaking of folk-lore, I have been interesting myself in the fox-superstition in Izumo. Here, and in Iwami, the superstition has local peculiarities. It is so powerful as to affect the value of real estate to the amount of hundreds of thousands of yen, and keen men have become rich by speculating upon the strength of it. If you want any facts about it, please tell me.

The scenery at Kiyomizu is superb. But there is no clear water except the view of Nanji-umi from the pagoda and the hills. The mamori, I regret to say, are uninteresting. There is, however, a curious Inari shrine. Beside it is a sort of huge trough filled with little foxes of all shapes, designs, and material. If you want anything, you pray, and put a fox in your pocket, and take it home. As soon as the prayer is granted you must take the fox back again and put it just where it was before. I should like to have taken one home; but my servants hate foxes and Inari and tofu and azuki-meshi and abura-gi and everything related to foxes. So I left it alone.

You will not be sorry to hear that I am to have the same publishers as Mr. Lowell — at least according to present indications. I am not vain enough to think I can ever write anything so beautiful as his "Chosŏn" or "Soul of the Far East," and will certainly make a poor showing beside his precise,

fine, perfectly worded work. But I am not going to try to do anything in his line. My work will deal wholly with exceptional things (chiefly popular) in an untilled field of another kind.

I gave seventy-two boys, as subject for composition the other day, the question: "What would you most like in this world?" Nine of the compositions contained in substance this answer: "To die for our Sacred Emperor." That is Shintō. Is n't it grand and beautiful? and do you wonder that I love it after that?

Most grateful regards from yours most sincerely

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — I went to Kōbe by rail, and thence by jinrikisha across Japan over mountains and through valleys of rice-fields — a journey of four days; but the most delightful in some respects of all my travelling experiences. The scenery had this peculiar effect, that it repeated for me many of my tropical impressions — received in a country of similar volcanic configuration — besides reviving for me all sorts of early memories of travel in Wales and England which I had forgotten. Nothing could be more beautiful than this mingling of the sensations of the tropics with those of Northern summers. And the people! My expectations were much more than realized: it is among the

country-people Japanese character should be studied, and I could not give my opinion of them now without using what you would call enthusiastic language. I felt quite sorry to reach this larger city, where the people are so much less simple, charming, and kindly — although I have every reason to be pleased with them. And in a mountain village I saw a dance unlike anything I ever saw before — some dance immemorially old, and full of weird grace. I watched it until midnight, and wish I could see it again. Nothing yet seen in Japan delighted me so much as this Bon-odori — in no wise resembling the same performance in the north. I found Buddhism gradually weaken toward the interior, while Shintō emblems surrounded the fields, and things suggesting the phallic worship of antiquity were being adored in remote groves.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *June*, 1891

DEAR MR. CHAMBERLAIN, — I am horribly ashamed to confess my weakness; but the truth must be told! After having lived for ten months exclusively upon Japanese fare, I was obliged to return (for a couple of days only!!!!) to the flesh-pots of Egypt. Having become sick, I could not recuperate upon Japanese eating — even when reënforced with eggs. I devoured enormous quantities of beef, fowl, and sausage, and fried solid stuffs, and

absorbed terrific quantities of beer — having had the good luck to find one foreign cook in Matsue. I am very much ashamed! But the fault is neither mine nor that of the Japanese: it is the fault of my ancestors — the ferocious, wolfish hereditary instincts and tendencies of boreal mankind. The sins of the father, etc.

Do you know anything about Chōzuba-no-Kami? There are images of him. He has no eyes — only ears. He passes much of his time in sleep. He is angry if any one enters the koka without previously hemming — so as to give him notice. He makes everybody sick if the place in which he dwells is not regularly cleaned. He goes to Kizuki and to Sada with the other gods once a year; and after a month's absence returns. When he returns, he passes his hand over each member of the family as they go to the Chōzuba — to make sure the family is the same. But one must not be afraid of the invisible hand. I think this kami is an extremely decent, respectable person, with excellent views on the subjects of morality and hygiene. I could not refuse him a lamp nor — for obvious reasons — the worship of incense.

I have not been able to travel yet far enough to find anything novel, but hope soon to do so. Meanwhile I am planning to make, if possible, not only a tour of Izumo, but also a very brief visit to Tōkyō in company with Mr. Nishida. Perhaps — I may be able to see both you and Mr. Lowell for a tiny little

while — you will always have a moment to spare.

I am always haunted by a particularly sarcastic translation Mr. Lowell, in one of his books, made of the name of a gate — "The Gate of Everlasting Ceremony." (Only an American could have dared to make such a translation.) I have been through the Gate and into the Court of Everlasting Ceremony; but the gate is a marvellous swarming of carven dragons and water, and the court is full of peace and sweetness. Most truly

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — Your welcome letter has just reached me, on the eve of a trip to Kizuki, and — unless extraordinary circumstances prevent — Oki islands. My guest has departed. He was so petted and made much of here, that I could not help regretting you also would not come. I think I could make you comfortable here — even in regard to diet — at any time when you could make the trip; and, as far as the people go, they would embarrass you with kindness. Your name here is — well, more than you would wish it to be.

Your last delightful letter I did not fully answer in my last, being hurried. What you said about the influence of health or sickness on the spiritual life of a man went straight to my heart. I have found, as you have done, that the possessor of pure horse-

— the childish, confiding, sweet Japanese girl — or the superb, calculating, penetrating Occidental Circe of our more artificial society, with her enormous power for evil, and her limited capacity for good? Viscount Torio's idea haunts me more and more; — I think there are very formidable truths in his observations about Western sociology. And the question comes: "In order to comprehend the highest good, is it necessary that we must first learn the largest power of evil?" For the one may be the Shadow of the other.

I am very much disappointed with Rein. I got much more information about my own particular line of study from your "Things Japanese" than from Rein. Rein himself confesses, after seven or eight years' labour, that he has only been able to make "a patchwork"! What, then, can a man like myself hope to do — without scientific knowledge, and without any hope of even acquiring the language of the country so as to read even a newspaper? Really it seems to me almost an impertinence on my part to try to write anything about Japan at all, and the only fact which gives me courage is that there exists no book especially devoted to the subject I hope to consider.

The deity of Mionoseki is called always by the people Ebisu, or Koto-shiro-nushi-no-Kami; — in the guide the deity is said to be Hiruko, who, I believe, has been identified by Shintō commentators with Hiruko, as I find in the article on the Seven

Gods of Good Fortune, in the Asiatic Transactions. But I am not sure what to say about Hiruko being the deity of Mio Jinja, as a general statement. My friends say that only a Shintō priest can decide, and I am going to see one.

Most truly
LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *August*, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — I have just received and read your most interesting letter on my return from Kizuki — where I should have liked to remain longer, but I must go to see the Bon-odori at Shimo-ichi, where it is danced differently from anywhere else, so far as I can learn, and in a thrillingly ghostly manner — so that one thinks he is looking at a Dance of Souls.

Before leaving I had a copy of Murray's Guide sent to the Kokuzō, who was more than pleased to see the picture of the great temple reproduced and to hear what was said about it. Before I went away, he gave me another singular entertainment, such as he alone could do — for he is King of Kizuki. (By the way, the old reverence for the Kokuzō is not dead. Folks do not believe now that whoever he looks at immediately becomes unable to move; but as I and my companion followed him to the great shrine, the pilgrims fell down and worshipped him as he passed.)

This was the entertainment he gave me: — Having invited me to the temple grounds, where seats were prepared, and a supper got ready for us, Mr. Senke gave some order, and the immense court immediately filled with people — thousands. Then at a signal began a round dance, such as I had never seen before — the Hōnen-odori, as anciently performed in Kizuki. It was so fascinating that I watched it until two o'clock in the morning. At least three hundred dancers were in the ring; — and the leader, standing on a mochi-mortar turned upside down, with an umbrella over his head, formed the axis of the great round, and turned slowly within it upon his pedestal. He had a superb voice.

The Kokuzō also got the beautiful miko dances photographed to please me, and presented me with many curious manuscripts, some of which I hope to show you later on. They were written expressly for me.

Now as to the shōryō-bune. Just as the Bon-odori differs in every part of Japan, and just as everything at Kizuki is totally different from everything at Ise, even to the Miko-kagura, so is the custom of sending away the Ships of the Souls different here. In many parts the ships are launched at two or three o'clock in the morning of the day after the Bon; or if ships are not launched, then floating lanterns are sent out by way of guiding the dead home. But in Kizuki the shōryō-bune are launched only by day and for those who have been drowned at sea, and the shapes

of the ships vary according to the kind of ship in which the lost man or woman perished. And they are launched every year for ten years after the death: — and when the soul returns yearly to visit the home, the ship is made ready, and a little stick of incense is lighted before launching it to take the beloved ghost back again, and a little stock of provisions is placed in it upon kawarake (principally dango). And the kaimyō of the dead is written upon the sail. And these boats are launched — not at night, as elsewhere, but in the daytime.

I have had the shōryō-bune boxed and addressed to you, and a priest wrote for me the kaimyō upon the sail and the date of death, according to the usual custom. But you will not get the thing before three weeks, as I am forwarding it by express, and you know how slow the process is!

As for my letters, use anything you wish, and, if you desire, my name. The only matter is this: that I am so small a personage as an author that I am much in doubt whether the use of my name attached to any opinion would give the opinion more weight than if expressed impersonally. Unless it should, it might not be good for the book. I leave the decision entirely to you.

I have been reading Mr. Lowell's book over again; for it is one thing to read it in Philadelphia, and quite another thing to read it after having spent a year and a half in Japan. And the power and the charm impress me more than ever. But I am so

much horrified by its conclusions — at least a few of them — that I try very hard to find a flaw therein. I think the idea that the degree of the development of individuality in a people necessarily marks its place in the great march of mind is not true necessarily. At least it may be argued about. For as the tendency of the age is toward class specialization and interdependent subdivision of all branches of knowledge and all practical application of that knowledge, the development of the individuality of every integer of a community would seem to me to unfit the unit to form a close part of any specialized class.

In brief, I doubt, or rather I wish to doubt, that the development of individuality is a lofty or desirable tendency. Much of what is called personality and individuality is intensely repellent, and makes the principal misery of Occidental life. It means much that is connected with pure aggressive selfishness: and its extraordinary development in a country like America or England seems a confirmation of Viscount Torio's theory that Western civilization has the defect of cultivating the individual at the expense only of the mass, and giving unbounded opportunities to human selfishness, unrestrained by religious sentiment, law, or emotional feeling.

What you say about your experience with Japanese poetry is indeed very telling and very painful to one who loves Japan. Depth, I have long suspected,

does not exist in the Japanese soul-stream. It flows much like the rivers of the country — over beds three quarters dry — very clear and charmingly beshadowed; — but made temporarily profound only by some passional storm. But it seems to me that some tendencies in Japanese prose give hope of some beautiful things. There was a story some time ago in the "Asahi Shimbun" about a shirabyōshi that brought tears to my eyes, as slowly and painfully translated by a friend. There was tenderness and poetry and pathos in it worthy of Le Fanu (I thought of the exquisite story of Le Fanu, "A Bird of Passage," simply as a superb bit of tender pathos) or Bret Harte — though, of course, I don't know what the style is. But the Japanese poem, as I judge from your work and the "Anthologie Japonaise," seems to me exactly the Japanese coloured print in words — nothing much more. Still, how the sensation of that which has been is flashed into heart and memory by the delicious print or the simple little verse.

I go to-morrow or the next day to Shimo-ichi. If you get the shōryō-bune, let me know. Any of your servants can, I think, fix the little masts and pennons in place. A small incense vessel and kawarake with dango, or models of dango, might be added by Dr. Tylor to the exhibit; but I suppose these are not essential.

With sincerest regards, ever truly

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *August*, 1891

DEAR MR. CHAMBERLAIN, — Before leaving, I must trouble you with another note or two.

For "Things Japanese," I would like to make a suggestion about the article "Theatre." The reference to O-Kuni seems to me extremely severe; for her story is very beautiful and touching. She was a miko in the Great Temple of Kizuki, and fell in love with a ronin named Nagoya Sanza, and she fled away with her lover to Kyōto. On the way, another ronin, who fell in love with her extraordinary beauty, was killed by Sanza. Always the face of the dead man haunted the girl.

At Kyōto she supported her lover by dancing the Miko-kagura in the dry bed of the river Kamogawa.

Then they went to Tōkyō (Yedo) and began to act. Sanza himself became a famous and successful actor. The two lived together until Sanza died.

Then she came back to Kizuki. She was learned, and a great poet in the style called renga. After Sanza's death she supported herself, or at least occupied herself, in teaching this poetic art. But she shaved off her hair and became a nun, and built the little Buddhist temple in Kizuki called Rengaji, in which she lived, and taught her art. And the reason she built the temple was that she might pray for the soul of the ronin whom the sight of her

beauty had ruined. The temple stood until thirty years ago. Nothing is now left of it but a broken statue of Jizō. Her family still live in Kizuki, and until the restoration the chief of the family was always entitled to a share of the profits of the Kizuki theatre, because his ancestress, the beautiful miko, had founded the art.

So I would like to suggest that poor O-Kuni have a kind word said for her. And I am sure we would both think very highly of her if she were alive.

There is a little Japanese book about her history; but I do not know the title. With best regards

LAFCADIO

TO PAGE M. BAKER

MATSUE, *August*, 1891

DEAR PAGE, — I answer your dear letter at once, as you wished me to do. It reached me to-day, on my return from Kizuki, the Holy City of Japan — where I have become something of a favourite with the high pontiff of the most ancient and sacred shrine of the land — which no other European was ever permitted to enter before me. And I am travelling now — stopping at home only on my way to other curious and unknown places. For this part of Japan is so little known that I was the first to furnish Murray's Guidebook editors with some information thereabout. . . .

But I had unknown friends here who knew me through my "Chinese Ghosts" — so they applied

to the Government for me, and I got an educational position under contract. The contract was renewed last March for a year — the extreme term allowed by law. My salary is only one hundred dollars per month; but that is equal here to more than double the sum in America. So that I am able to keep up nearly the nicest house in town — outside of a few very rich men — to have several servants, to give dinners, and to dress my little wife tolerably nicely. Moreover, life in Japan is something so placid and kindly and gentle — that it is just like one of those dreams in which everybody is good-natured about everything. The missionaries have no reason to like me — for one had to be discharged to secure me; and I teach the boys to respect their own beautiful faith and the gods of their fathers, and not to listen to proselytism. However, the missionaries leave me alone. We have a tiff about Spencer in the "Japan Mail" sometimes; but as a rule I am completely isolated from all Europeans. It is only at long intervals one ever gets so far — with the exception of an austere female stationed here in the vague hope of making a convert.

Of course I will send you a photograph of my little wife. I must tell you I am married only in the Japanese manner as yet — because of the territorial law. Only by becoming a Japanese citizen, which I think I shall do, will it be possible to settle the matter satisfactorily. By the present law, the moment a foreigner marries a native according to English law,

she becomes an English citizen, and her children English subjects, if she have any. Therefore she becomes subject to territorial laws regarding foreigners — obliged to live within treaty limits, and virtually separated from her own people. So it would be her ruin to marry her according to English form, until I become a Japanese in law; — for should I die, she would have serious reason to regret her loss of citizenship.

As for going abroad — I mean back to you all — I don't know what to say. Just now, of course, I could not if I would; for I am under legal contract. Then my plans for a book on Japan are but a quarter finished. Then, my little woman would be very unhappy, I fear, away from her people and her gods; — for this country is so strange that it is impossible for any who have never lived here for a long time to understand the enormous difference between the thought and feeling of the Japanese and our own. But, later on, perhaps I *must* go back for a time to see about getting out a book. Then I will probably appeal to you for a year's employ or something. The Orient is more fascinating than you may suppose: here, remember, the people *really* eat lotuses: they form a common article of diet. But no human being can tell exactly what the future has in store for him. So I cannot for the life of me say now what I shall do. . . .

We are many years behind you here. In Matsue there is a little newspaper of which I must send you

a copy as a curiosity. Every week or two there is an article in it about me. For "the foreigner's" every act is a subject for comment. There is no such thing in Japan as privacy. There are no secrets. Every earthly thing a man does is known to everybody, and life is extravagantly, astoundingly frank. The moral effect is, in my opinion, extremely good — though the missionaries, who lie hard about this country, say the reverse. Think of nothing but a paper screen dividing all your life from the lives about you — a paper screen to poke a hole through, which is not considered outrageous, unless the screen be decorated with celebrated paintings. That is *common* life here. As for me, I have a secluded house, with three gardens round it. But, according to popular custom, I must never shut the door, or lock myself up except at night. One must not be nervous here, or impatient: it is impossible to remain either in such an atmosphere, or to be ill-natured, or to hide anything. And just think of it! — I having to give lectures and make speeches through an interpreter, which lectures and speeches are duly printed in a Japanese magazine! To speak before a Japanese audience, however, is delightful. One look at all the placid smiling faces reassures the most shrinking soul at once.

Well, at all events, I shall write you often, and send you something queer betimes. I must now get ready to take the little steamer by which I start.

With best regards to all, and to you best love, I remain,

LAFCADIO HEARN

This is my legal seal.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

YABASE, *August*, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — I have discovered Yabase. No European seems to have ever been here before. On arriving at Shimo-ichi to see the Bon-odori, I found I had come three days too soon, and the little town is very hot and uncomfortable.

Well, Yabase is an extremely quiet, pretty little town, with a much better hotel than I have seen for quite a while — and a superb beach. Strange to say, there are no boats and nobody ever thinks of going into the sea, except children. So whenever I go to swim, the entire population crowd the beach to look on. Happily I am a very good swimmer — could swim for twenty-four hours without fatigue. Thus the people have a mezurashii mono to behold. Another queer thing about Yabase is that it is the only place I have seen in Japan where there is no shrine of Inari. It is a strictly Buddhist town, and Nichiren prevails. There is a yashiro on a neighbouring mountain, however. There is no Bon-odori

here, one must go to the next town to see it, which I will do to-night. There has been much rough weather — tremendous seas breaking along the coast. At Kizuki I thought the hotel was going to be carried away; and all the approaches to it, bridges, etc., were dashed to pieces. Here, the sea is opposed by a loftier coast, but it becomes something one cannot laugh at on a windy day.

I must tell you an incident of the revival of pure Shintō. At Kizuki, until very recently, two of the hotels were kept by families belonging to some Buddhist sect, as well as to the Kizuki sect of Shintō, and so in their establishments, as in nearly every Izumo household, there was a butsudan as well as a kamidana. But some pilgrims who came to Kizuki, full of fiery Shintō zeal, were wroth to see a butsudan in the inns of the Sacred City, and girded up their loins, and sought out an hotel where no Buddha was, and went there — and sent out word to their fellow pilgrims. The result has been that all the hotels in Kizuki have suppressed Buddhism, or at least its externals: they have become pure Shintō. This incident is rather anomalous, but it is a confirmation of what I said before, regarding the predominance of Shintō.

From Mionoseki, I hope to send you some o fuda of interest. The prospects of getting to Oki are growing small, however — for the time being.

P.S. Alas! I have not discovered Yabase! Some

detestable missionary was here before me — for one hour only, it is true, but he was here! — And to-day, being a day of high surf, there came down to the beach with planks, divers boys, who swam far out and came in, as the Americans say, "a-kite-ing," on the crests of waves — swimming unspeakably well, after the fashion of the Polynesian islanders. So that I feel small! I offered to teach them what I know in exchange for instruction as to how to come "a-kite-ing" on the top of a wave.

As for the little Japanese pipe:

I cannot think that its form and dimensions simply evidence the Japanese fondness for "small things." The ancient Samurai pipes, of which I have seen many fine specimens, were very much larger than the modern kiseru. The pipe seems to me rather the natural evolution of a utensil in its relation to the domestic life of Japan. The little pipe is admirably adapted to the multifarious interruptions of Japanese occupations. Long-sustained effort, protracted and unbroken study, are things foreign to Japanese existence. The Western pipe is good between the teeth of a man trained to remain on duty without remission of mental labour or relaxation of muscle for five or six hours at a stretch. But the Japanese idea of labour is blessed and full of interruptions as his year is full of matsuri. Thus, the little pipe, with its three conventional whiffs, exactly suits his wants. Its artistic evolution is also a matter worthy of study. Some of the best metal-

work has been done upon it. From the pipe of three sen to the pipe of thirty yen, there is as great a range of artistic design and finish as in the realm of kakemono. Pipes of silver are the fashion. Without engraving, the silver must be very heavy. If the two metal parts be elaborately engraved and inlaid, the metal may be made as light as possible. A really fine pipe becomes an heirloom.

The introduction of European costume among the class of officials and teachers necessarily produced a change in the smoking paraphernalia which formed a part of the native Japanese outfit. The tabako-ire was reshaped, so as to accommodate itself to a breast or side pocket, and the little pipe shortened so as to be enclosed without the tobacco pouch, much as a pencil is enclosed in a pocket-book. Many beautifully designed things thus came into existence. A nice small pipe of silver may now be had to order for about three yen — (designed). The netsuke has, of course, no place in this form of the tabako-ire. I have collected over a hundred different forms of the new pipe. This has no bamboo: the whole thing is one solid piece of metal. The best are inlaid or engraved: — the bowl and mouthpiece (at least) being usually of silver, worked into steel or brass.

Pipes with long stems are preferable for house use. They do not burn the tongue so quickly as the short pipe. However, the tobacco itself has much to do with this matter. Those jōros, geishas, and others, who smoke the greater part of the time, use

a special tobacco which does not blister the tongue or lips.

With the pipe for an evolutionary centre, a whole intricate and complex world of smoking-furniture has come into existence — of which the richest specimens are perhaps those lacquered tabako-bon for the use of aristocratic ladies, with plated or solid silver hibachi and haifuki. The winter hibachi for smoking purposes has, of course, many forms; — some of the daintiest being those invented for use in theatres, to be carried in the hand. The smoker, who finds a handsome bronze hibachi placed before him on a winter's day, is not supposed to empty his pipe into it by knocking the metal head of the pipe upon the rim: if genteel, he will always insert the leather flap of his tobacco pouch between the pipe-head and the hibachi — so as to prevent the tapping of the pipehead from causing a dent in the bronze. At present the most genteel tabako-bon for summer use has a small cup of bronze, instead of the usual cup of porcelain. The smoker empties his pipe, not into the hibachi of bronze or porcelain, but into the bamboo haifuki which is an indispensable part of the summer tabako-bon.

The foreigner who uses the Japanese pipe commences his experience with that apparently simple article by burning small round holes in everything near him — the tatami, the zabuton, and especially his own yukata or kimono. The small pellet of ignited tobacco contained in the kiseru becomes,

after a few whiffs, a fiery pill, loose, and ready to leap from the pipe at a breath. Wherever it falls, it pierces holes like a red-hot shot. But the Japanese expert smoker rarely burns anything. He draws from his pipe at the very most three whiffs and at once empties it into the haifuki. To smoke a Japanese pipe to the bottom, moreover, results in clogging up the pipe. The art of cleaning it out afterwards is quite elaborate. A common plan is to heat the pipehead in the charcoal of the hibachi, and then blow out the refuse. But this method corrodes and spoils a fine pipe. The cleaning of the fine pipe must be done with a twist of tough fine paper passed up the stem and pulled out through the head.

Besides smoking-furniture, a special code of politeness has been evolved around the Japanese pipe.

The pipe, I regret to say, is in vulgar circles used as a domestic rod. The wife or child who is very naughty may receive a severe blow with the kiseru, or even many. However, it is not so bad as the instruments of punishment in vogue elsewhere.

I am not sure if I have been able to say anything worth your while to read about the pipe, but I think the Japanese pipe is really worth more consideration than is usually given it.

NOTE. Women's pipes have a special, delicate form — and are made very small and dainty — also their tabako-ire.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

YURA, *August*, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — If you are not frightfully busy, which I suppose nobody is at this time of the year, perhaps some of my adventures will interest you.

I found that the Bon-odori is different, not only in every village, but even in every commune. So I was very anxious to see all the varieties of this curious dance that I could. I heard that at Ōtsuka, near Yabase, there was a very remarkable kind of dance danced; and I went, in Japanese costume, with a dozen citizens of Yabase, to see it. It turned out to be not worth seeing at all: the people had no more knowledge of dancing — or rather, much less, than Sioux or Comanches.

Ōtsuka is a stony, large, primitive-looking village — full of rude energy and, I am sorry to say, of bad manners — a terrible thing to say about any Japanese town. But I have been in about fifty Japanese villages, where I loved all the people, and always made a few of them love me, and Ōtsuka is the first exception I found to the general rule about the relation between foreigners and hyakushō-no-jin. At Ōtsuka the people left their dance to pelt the foreigner with little pellets of sand and mud — crying out: "Bikki! — bikki!" What that means I do not know. So both I and the whole of the Yabase people turned back. The pelting was not very savage — it

was just like the work of naughty children: a foreign mob would have thrown stones, which these folk were very careful not to do — in spite of the fact that there were no police. I passed through this village twice since, and found the attitude of its people peculiarly rough — bordering upon hostility. Compared with the roughness of — say a Barbados mob — it was a very gentle thing, but it gave me the first decidedly unpleasant sense of being an alien that I have ever had in Japan.

I have just returned from Togo-ike — a place described in your Guide.

Frankly, I detest Togo-ike. But it is extremely popular with travelling Japanese — especially the shōbai. Imagine a valley of rice-fields, ringed in by low jagged wooded hills, with a lakelet in the middle of it about a mile and a quarter long (at most) by half a mile broad, and hotels built out into the water. The coldest place I have yet been in Japan. The hotels are supplied with hot water from the volcanic springs through bamboo pipes, but the baths do not compare with those of the much humbler Izumo resort — Tama-tsukuri. The cold air to me was penetrating, sickly, but this may be idiosyncrasy. To one who has lived in the tropics the chill of rice-fields means fever and death: and some of my old tropical fears came up. Then the hotel has only mishido, no karakami — so that one is never alone. One hour of Yabase is worth a season at Togo-ike — free of expense — to one who loves quiet and simple

ways. So I shall spend a couple more days there before going to Mionoseki.

I have given up Oki, until winter. The health and strength I get from seawater bathing have made me delay too long. But I will get to Oki later.

Ever yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

YABASE, *August*, 1891

DEAR MR. NISHIDA, — I have had a pleasant time in different little drowsy sea-villages — sleeping, eating, drinking sake, and bathing. Yabase is about the most pleasant place I ever stopped at here.

But, alas! — *I saw no* Bon-odori at all at Shimo-ichi. I seemed to have gone too soon; — at Yabase, there is no Bon-odori; and at Ōtsuka, where I next travelled, on foot, to see the Bon-odori, I had an adventure of a peculiar kind.

Ōtsuka seems to be a rough sort of place. Its folk are big hustling noisy countrymen; and when they are full of sake inclined to be mischievous. They stopped dancing to see the foreigner. The foreigner took refuge from the pressure of the crowd in a house, where he sat upon the floor, and smoked. The crowd came into the house and round the house, and uttered curious observations and threw sand and water at the foreigner. Therefore the people of Yabase, who had accompanied the foreigner to Ōtsuka, arose and made vigorous protests; and we

all returned to Yabase together. At Yabase, the police and some of the principal people more than made up to me for the rudeness of the Ōtsuka folk — they apologized for the Ōtsuka folk until I was really ashamed of being so kindly looked after; and I was entertained very generously; and the police told me that anything in the world I wished their advice or help about, only to send them word. (The hostility of the Ōtsuka folk was really a very childish sort of thing, not worth making a fuss about; — a Western crowd would have thrown stones or rotten eggs. Indeed I am not sure whether the crowd was really hostile at all. I rather think that they wanted to see the foreigner move — so they tried to make him stir about — like a kedamono in a cage.)

To-morrow I return to Matsue, by way of Mionoseki; — I really regret leaving Yabase: the people are the kindest, most honest, straightforward folk imaginable. And I have made several friends; — at the temple of Nichiren here, I got some beautiful o fuda.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

MATSUE, *August*, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR CHAMBERLAIN, — Having reached a spot where I can write upon something better than a matted floor, I find three most pleasant letters from you. The whole of the questions in them I cannot answer to-night, but will do so presently, when I obtain the full information.

However, as to cats' tails I can answer at once. Izumo cats (and I was under the impression until recently that all Japanese cats were alike) are generally born with long tails. But there is a belief that any cat whose tail is not cut off in kittenhood, will become an obake or a nekomata, and there are weird stories about cats with long tails dancing at night, with towels tied round their heads. There are stories about petted cats eating their mistress and then assuming the form, features, and voice of the victim. Of course you know the Buddhist tradition that no cat can enter paradise. The cat and the snake alone wept not for the death of Buddha. Cats are unpopular in Izumo, but in Hōki I saw that they seemed to exist under more favourable conditions. The real reason for the unpopularity of the cat is its powers of mischief in a Japanese house; — it tears the tatami, the karakami, the shōji, scratches the woodwork, and insists upon carrying its food into the best room to eat it upon the floor. I am a great lover of cats, having "raised," as the Americans say, more than fifty; — but I could not gratify my desire to have a cat here. The creature proved too mischievous, and wanted always to eat my uguisu.

The oscillation of one's thoughts concerning the Japanese — the swaying you describe — is and has for some time been mine also.

There are times when they seem so small! And then again, although they never seem large, there is

a vastness behind them — a past of indefinite complexity and marvel — an amazing power of absorbing and assimilating — which forces one to suspect some power in the race so different from our own that one cannot understand that power. And as you say, whatever doubts or vexations one has in Japan, it is only necessary to ask one's self: "Well, who are the best people to live with?" For it is a question whether the intellectual pleasures of social life abroad are not more than dearly bought at the cost of social pettinesses which do not seem to exist in Japan at all.

Would you be horrified to learn that I have become passionately fond of daikon — not the fresh but the strong ancient pickled daikon? But then the European Stilton cheese, or Limburger, is surely quite as queer. I have become what they call here a jōgo — and find that a love of sake creates a total change in all one's eating habits and tastes. All the sweet things the geko likes, I cannot bear when taking sake. By the way, what a huge world of etiquette, art, taste, custom, has been developed by sake. An article upon sake — its social rules — its vessels — its physiological effects — in short the whole romance and charm of a Japanese banquet, ought to be written by somebody. I hope to write one some day, but I am still learning.

As to Dr. Tylor and the anthropological institute. If he should want any paper that I could furnish, I

would be glad and consider myself honoured to please him. As for your question about the o fuda, why, I should think it no small pleasure to be mentioned merely as one of your workers and friends. Though the little I have been able to send does not seem to me to deserve your kindest words, it is making me very happy to have been able to please you at all. Whatever I can write or send, make always any use of you please.

About "seeing Japan from a distance" — I envy you your coming chance. I could not finish my book on the West Indies until I saw the magical island again through regret, as through a summer haze — and under circumstances which left me perfectly free to think, which the soporific air of the tropics makes difficult. (Still the book is not what it ought to be, for I was refused all reasonable help, and wrote most of it upon a half-empty stomach, or with my blood full of fever.) But to think of Japan in an English atmosphere will be a delicious experience for you after so long an absence. I should not be surprised should the experience result in the creation of something which would please your own feelings as an author better than any other work you have made. Of course it is at the time one is best pleased that one does one's real best in the artistic line.

By the way, since you like those Shintō prints — and I might get you others — what about a possible edition of your "Kojiki" illustrated by Japanese

conceptions of this kind, colours and all? Such work can be so cheaply done in Japan! And an index! How often I wished for an index. I have made an imperfect one of my own. It is believed here that Hahaki is the ancient name of the modern Hōki. I was told this when I wanted to go to the legendary burial-place of Izanami.

As usual, I find I have been too presumptuous in writing offhand about cats' tails. On enquiring, I learn that there are often, born of the same mother, Izumo kittens with short tails, and kittens with long tails. This would show that two distinct species of cats exist here. The long-tailed kittens are always deprived when possible of the larger part of their caudal appendage. The short tails are spared. If an old cat be seen with a short tail, people say — "this cat is old, but she has a short tail: therefore she is a good cat." (For the obake cat gets two tails when old, and every wicked cat has a long tail.) I am told that at the recent bon, in Matsue, cats of the evil sort were seen to dance upon the roofs of the houses.

What you tell me about those Shintō rituals and their suspicious origin seems to me quite certainly true. So the kara-shishi and the mon and the drag-on-carvings and the tōrōs — all stare me in the face as pillage of Buddhism. But the funeral rite which I saw and took part in, on the anniversary of the death of Prince Sanjō, struck me as immemorially primitive. The weird simplicity of it — the banquet

to the ghost, the covering of the faces with white paper, the moaning song, the barbarian music, all seemed to me traditions and echoes of the very childhood of the race. I shall try to discover the genesis of the book you speak of as dubious in character. The Shintō christening ceremony is strictly observed here, and there are curious facts about the funeral ceremonies — totally at variance with and hostile to Buddhism.

By the way, when I visited a tera in Mionoseki after having bought o fuda at the Miojinja, I was told I must not carry the o fuda into the court of the tera. The Kami would be displeased.

For the moment, good-bye.

Ever faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

MATSUE, 1891

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . My household relations have turned out to be extremely happy, and to bind me very fast here at the very time that I was beginning to feel like going away. It does not now seem possible for me ever to go away. To take the little woman to another country would be to make her extremely unhappy; for no kindness or comfort could compensate for the loss of her own social atmosphere — in which all thoughts and feelings are so totally different from our own.

I find literary work extremely difficult here. The

mental air about one has a totally disintegrating effect upon Western habits of thinking; — no strong emotion, no thrills or inspirations ever come to me, so I am still in doubt how to work. Whether I shall ever be able to make a really good book on Japan is still a question; but if I do, it will require years of steady dry work, without one real flash in it. The least fact in this Oriental life is so different from ours, and so complex in its relationship to other facts, that to explain it requires enormous time and patience.

I was made a little homesick by your letter about New Orleans, mentioning so many familiar names. It brought back many pleasant memories.

Ah! you are in a dangerous world now. You will meet some charming, unsophisticated Southern girl, so much nicer than most Northern girls, that the South may fascinate you too much.

My correspondents have all dropped off except you. Sometimes a letter wanders to me — six months old — announcing my nomination as vice-president of some small literary society; but the outer world is slowly and surely passing away. At the same time the harder side of Japanese character is beginning to appear — in spots. The women are certainly the sweetest beings I have ever seen, as a general rule: all the good things of the race have been put into them. They are just loving, joyous, simple-hearted children with infinite surprises of pretty ways. About the men — one never gets very

close to them. One's best friends have a certain far-offness about them, even when breaking their necks to please you. There is no such thing as clapping a man on the back and saying, "Hello! old boy!" There is no such thing as clapping a fellow on the knee, or chucking a fellow under the ribs. All such familiarities are terribly vulgar in Japan. So each one has to tickle his own soul and clap it on the back, and say "Hello" to it. And the soul, being Western, says: "Do you expect me always to stay in this extraordinary country? I want to go home, or get back to the West Indies, at least. Hurry up and save some money." As it is, I have two hundred dollars saved up, even after dressing my little wife like a queen.

And now I am about to journey to outrageous places, among very strange gods. Good-bye for a while. Ever most affectionately

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

MATSUE, *October*, 1891

DEAR DEVILISHLY DELIGHTFUL OLD FELLOW, — I have been dancing an Indian war-dance of exultation in my Japanese robes, to the unspeakable astonishment of my placid household. After which I passed two hours in a discourse in what my Japanese friends ironically term "The Hearnian Dialect." Subject of exultation and discourse — the marriage of Miss Elizabeth Bisland. If she only knew how

often I have written her name upon the blackboard for the eyes of the students of the Normal School to look upon when they asked me to tell them about English names! And they pronounce it after me with a pretty Japanese accent and lisp: "Aileesabbet Beeslan!" Well, well, well! — you most d——nably jolly fellow!!

... Civilization is full of deadly perils in small things — is n't it? and horrors in large things — railroad collisions, steamboat explosions, elevator accidents — all nightmares of machinery. How funny the quiet of this Oriental life. The other day a man brought a skin to the house to sell — a foreign skin. Very beautiful the animal must have been, and the price was cheap. But the idea of murder the thing conveyed was horrible to me, and I was glad to find my folks of the same mind. "No, no! — we don't like to see it," they said. And the man departed, and in his heart pain was lord.

Oh! as for vacation, I always get two months, or nearly two months — the greater part of July and all of August. This time I have been travelling alone with my little wife, who translates my "Hearnian dialect" into Japanese — eating little dishes of seaweed, and swimming across all the bays I could find on the Izumo coast. They take me to be a good swimmer out here; but I am a little afraid to face really rough water at a distance from shore. — About getting to you, I don't really see my way clear to do it for another year or two — must wait till I

feel very strong with the Japanese. Just now friend Chamberlain is trying to get me south, to teach Latin and English, at two hundred dollars per month, in a beautiful climate. I would like it — but the Latin — "hic sunt leones!" I am awfully rusty. Should I be offered the place and dare to take it, you would find me at Kumamoto, in Kyūshū — much more accessible than Matsue. I think I have a better chance of seeing you here than you of seeing me. But what a dear glorious chap you are to offer me the ways and means; — I'll never forget it, old boy — never!

Pretty to talk of "my pen of fire." I've lost it. Well, the fact is, it is no use here. There is n't any fire here. It is all soft, dreamy, quiet, pale, faint, gentle, hazy, vapoury, visionary — a land where lotus is a common article of diet — and where there is scarcely any real summer. Even the seasons are feeble ghostly things. Don't please imagine there are any tropics here. Ah! the tropics — they still pull at my heart-strings. Goodness! my real field was there — in the Latin countries, in the West Indies and Spanish-America; and my dream was to haunt the old crumbling Portuguese and Spanish cities, and steam up the Amazon and Orinoco, and get romances nobody else could find. And I could have done it, and made books that would sell for twenty years yet. Perhaps, however, it's all for the best: I might have been killed in that Martinique hurricane. And then, I think I may see the tropics

on this side of the world yet — the Philippines, the Straits Settlements — perhaps Reunion or Madagascar. (When I get rich!)

Besides, I *must* finish my work on Japan, and that will take a couple of years more. It is the hardest country to learn — except China — in the world. I am the only man who ever attempted to learn the people seriously; and I think I shall succeed. But there is work ahead — phew! I have sent away about fifteen hundred pages MSS., and I have scarcely touched the subject — merely broken ground.

. . . Fact is, there is only one way to really marry a Japanese legally — to be adopted into a Japanese family after marrying the daughter, and so become a Japanese citizen. Otherwise the wife loses her citizenship — a terrible calamity to a good girl. She would have to live in the open ports, unless I could always live in the interior. And the children — the children would have no rights or prospects in Japan. I don't see any way out of it except to abandon my English citizenship, and change my name to Koizumi — my wife's name. I am still hesitating a little — because of the Japanese. *Would* they try to take advantage, and cut down my salary? I am thinking, and waiting. But meantime, I am morally, and according to public opinion, fast married.

By the way, she would very much like to see E.B. If E. has a yacht, make her "sail the seas over" and come to this place; and she will be much pleased and humbly served and somewhat amused.

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

Well, so long, with best heart-wishes and thanks

LAFCADIO HEARN

I have accepted a new position, in Southern Japan.

Oh! read Zola's "L'Argent" — you will appreciate it. There are delicious *financial* characters in it. For goodness' sake, don't read a translation.

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, 1891

DEAR FRIEND NISHIDA, — Your very welcome letter came to-day. I was beginning to be anxious about you, as my cook, who arrived here only yesterday, said that it was extremely cold in Matsue; and I was afraid the bitter weather might have given you cold. I am very glad you are taking care of yourself. . . .

I am now a little more reconciled to Kumamoto; but it is the most uninteresting city I was ever in, in Japan. The famous shrines of Katō Kiyomasa (the Katō-sha and the Hommyōji) are worth visiting; they are at Akitagun, a little outside the town. The city is packed with soldiers. Things are dear and ugly here — except silks. This is quite a place for pretty silks, and they are cheaper than in Matsue: but there is nothing pretty in the shape of lacquer-ware, porcelain, or bronze. There is no art, and there are no kakemonos, and no curio-shops.

The weather here is queer — something like that

of the Pacific slope, a few hundred miles north of San Francisco. The nights and the mornings are cold; and at sunrise, you see the ground covered with white frost, and mists all over the hills. But by noon it gets warm, and in the afternoon even hot; then after sundown it turns cold again.

Mr. Kano was too modest when he told me there were other teachers who spoke English better than he. There are not. He speaks and writes better English than any Japanese I know. However, there is a Mr. Sakuma here, from Kyōto, who has a very uncommon knowledge of *literary* English: he has read a great deal, has a good library, and has made a special study of Old English and Middle English. He teaches literature (English) and grammar, etc. Mr. Ōzawa (*I think*) is the second English teacher: I like him the best personally. He has that fine consideration for others which you have — and which is not a common quality of men anywhere. He speaks French. The Head-master, Mr. Sakurai, a young and very silent man, also speaks French. Nearly all the teachers speak English — except the delightful old teacher of Chinese, who has a great beard and a head like Socrates. I liked him at once — just as I liked Mr. Katayama at first sight. I wonder if there is anything in the learning of Chinese which makes men amiable. Perhaps it is the constant need of patience and the æsthetic sentiment also involved by such studies, that changes or modifies character so agreeably. I don't know much,

however, about the teachers yet. I say good-morning and good-evening, and sit in my corner, and smoke my pipe. So far they all seem very gentle and courteous. I think I shall be able to get along pleasantly with them; but I don't think I shall become as friendly with any of them as I was with you. Indeed there is nobody like you here — no chats in the ten minutes — no curious information — no projects and discoveries. I often look at your pretty little tea-tray, with the semi and the dragon-flies upon it — and wish I could hear your voice at the door. . . .

LAFCADIO HEARN

I have become very strong, and weigh about twenty pounds more than I did last summer. But I can't tell just why. Perhaps because I am eating three full meals a day instead of two. My house is not quite so large as the one I had in Matsue. We are five here now — myself and wife, the cook, the kurumaya, and O-Yone. It was very funny about O-Yone when she first came. Nobody could understand her Izumo dialect (she is from Imaichi); but both she and the kurumaya can now get along. The hotels here are outrageously expensive: at least some of them. I cannot recommend the Shirakuin for cheapness. I paid, including tea-money, twenty-four yen for six and a half days. No more of that!

About the boys? Yes, Ōtani writes to me, and

Azukizawa — and I got a charming letter from Tanabe, late of the fifth Class.

I was surprised to hear of the decision of the Council. But I cannot help thinking this is much better than that the boys should be taught by a missionary; ninety-nine out of a hundred will not teach conscientiously and painstakingly. And a clever Japanese teacher can do so much. I have now no one to prepare some of my classes for the English lesson; and I know what it means. The main use of a foreign teacher is to teach accent and conversational habits. But I suspect that within another generation few foreign teachers will be employed for English — except in higher schools and for special purposes. There will be thousands of Japanese teachers, speaking English perfectly well. I hope you will be the new Director. Please kindly remember me to Mr. Sato, Mr. Katayama, Mr. Nakamura (I wish I could hear him laugh now), and all friends.

P.S. Setsu insists that I shall tell you that the kurumaya of this town are oni, and that one must be careful in hiring them; — so that if you should come down here when the weather is better, you must be as careful as in Tōkyō — where they are also oni. Also that rent is high: my house is eleven yen. But with any Izumo cook, living is just as cheap as in Matsue; and there is much good bread and meat and sake and food of all kinds.

TO MASANOBU ŌTANI

I am sorry about that Tamatsukuri affair; for I wrote, as you will see, words of *extreme* praise — never suspecting such possibilities. Why, the first duty of gentlemen is to face death like soldiers — not like sailors on a sinking ship, who stave in the casks — sometimes. However, don't such things make you wish for the chance to do the same duty better? They do me. That is one good effect of a human weakness: it makes others wish to be strong and to do strong things.

TO MASANOBU ŌTANI

KUMAMOTO, *November*, 1891

MY DEAR ŌTANI, — I have just received your most kind letter, for which my sincerest thanks. But I don't want to correct it, and send it back to you: I would rather keep it always, as a pleasant remembrance.

It has been very cold in Kumamoto — a sharp frost came last night, with an icy wind. Everybody says such cold is extraordinary here; but I am not quite sure if this is really true, because they have told me everywhere I have been during the last twenty years: "Really we never saw such weather before."

Kumamoto is not nearly so pretty a city as Matsue, although it is as neat as Tenjin-machi. There are some very beautiful houses and hotels, but the common houses are not so fine as those of Matsue. Most of the old Shizoku houses were burned during

the Satsuma war, so that there are no streets like Kita-bori-machi, and it is very hard to find a nice house. I have been fortunate enough to find one nearly as nice as the one I had in Matsue, but the garden is not nearly so pretty; and the rent is eleven dollars — nearly three times more than what I paid in Matsue. There is, of course, no lake here, and no beautiful scenery like that of Shinji-ko; but on clear days we can see the smoke rising from the great volcano of Aso-san.

As for the Dai Go Kōtō-Chūgakkō, the magnificence of it greatly surprised me. The buildings are enormous — of brick for the most part; and they reminded me at first sight of the Imperial University of Tōkyō. Most of the students live in the school. There is a handsome military uniform; but all the boys do not wear it — some wear Japanese clothes, and the rules about dress (except during drilling-time, etc.) are not very strict. There is no bell. The classes are called and dismissed by the sound of a bugle. There are ten minutes between class-hours for rest; but the buildings are so long, that it takes ten minutes to walk through them to the teacher's room, which is in a separate building. Two of the teachers speak French, and six or seven English: there are twenty-eight teachers. The students are very nice — and we became good friends at once. There are three classes, corresponding with the three higher classes of the Jinjō Chūgakkō — and two higher classes. I do not now teach on Saturdays.

Masanobu Ōtani

there is any such worship, which I doubt), what prayers are said?

Are any particular *family*-prayers said by Buddhists when praying before the kaimyō, or do the common people utter only the ordinary prayer of their sect — such as "Namu Amida Butsu," or, "Namu Myōhō Rengekyō?"

But do not give yourself too much trouble about these things, and take your own time; — in a month, or two months, or even three months will be quite time enough. And if you have no time, do not trouble yourself about it at all; and write to me that you cannot, or would rather not — then I will ask some one who is less busy.

I shall be hoping really to see you in Kumamoto next year. You would like the school very much. Perhaps you would not like the city as well as Matsue; but the school is not in the city exactly; it is a little outside of it, and you would live in the school, probably — or very near it. The students make excursions to Nagasaki and other places, by railroad and steamer.

Now about your letter. It was very nice. You made a few mistakes in using "*will*" — and in saying "if I would have promote my school." It ought to have been "if I should go to a higher school."

"This will be a bad letter" ought to have been "I fear this *is* . . . etc." But you and I and everybody learn best by making mistakes.

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

With best remembrance from your old teacher, believe me

Ever truly yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, *December*, 1891

DEAR FRIEND NISHIDA, — Your letter has just reached me. I am more sorry than I can express to hear of the death of Yokogi. Nature seems strangely cruel in making such a life, and destroying it before the time of ripeness. And the good hearts and the fine brains pass to dust, while the coarse and the cunning survive all dangers. . . .

The name of the delightful old samurai who teaches Chinese here, I think you know — Akizuki. He was at Aizu, and made a great soldier's name; and he is just as gentle and quiet as Mr. Katayama — and still more paternally charming in his manner. He is sixty-three years old. . . .

I have made no friends among the teachers yet. I attended my first Japanese dinner with them the night before last; and, because *you* were not there, I think I made some queer mistakes about the dishes — when to use chopsticks, etc. There were no geishas: the former director had forbidden their employment at teachers' dinners; and I don't think that Mr. Kano is going to revoke the order. The reason for it was not prudery; but the opposition paper used to take advantage of the presence of

geishas at the teachers' banquets to print nasty things against the school. So it was determined not to give the paper a chance to say anything more. . . .

I have been very cautious in writing you about the climate, because I wanted to be very sure that, in case you should come here, it would be for the best. So far the climate is like this: every morning and night cold, with white frost; afternoons so warm that one can go out without an overcoat. Very little rain. No snow yet; but I am told that it will come.

As for me, I have become stronger than I have been for years. All my clothes, even my Japanese kimono, have become too small!! But I cannot say whether this be the climate or the diet or what. Setsu says it is because I have a good wife; — but she might be prejudiced, you know! My lungs are sound as a bell; I never cough at all. This is all that I can tell you at present.

No: O-Yone came with us. She took O-Yoshi's place, when O-Yoshi went back to live with her mother. I am sorry to say I had to send the kuru-maya away. He abandoned his wife in Matsue, and she went to the house of the Inagaki, crying and telling a very pitiful story. When I heard this, I told the man he must go back. But on the same day later, I found he had been doing very wrong things — trying to make trouble among the other servants, and playing tricks upon us by making secret arrangements with the shopkeepers. I had bought him clothes, and given him altogether fourteen yen and

fifty sen, besides his board and lodging — including five yen to go back with. But he had squandered his little money and how he managed afterward I don't know. I could not help him any more; for his cunningness and foolishness together made it impossible to keep him a day longer in the house. The cook is from the Nisho-tei — to which you first introduced me. The kurumaya's place would have been a nice place for a good man. I shall be very careful about employing another kurumaya by the month.

Now about the question you asked me. The words you underlined are from the Jewish Bible. The ideas of VALUE and of WEIGHT were closely connected in the minds of the old Semites, as they are still, to some extent, in our own. Everything was sold by WEIGHT, and according to the WEIGHT was the VALUE. The weighing was done with the SCALES or BALANCE, of which there were several kinds. The balancing was done by suspending a weight at one end of the "balance," or scales, as in Japan, and the article to be sold in the other. If too light, the article was "found wanting" (i.e.: in weight). So in such English expressions as "to make LIGHT of" (to ridicule, to belittle, to speak contemptuously of) the idea of WEIGHT thus estimated survives. Now, in the mythology of the Jews, God is represented as one who WEIGHS, in a scale or balance, the good that is in a man (his MORAL WEIGHT or VALUE) and sends him to hell if he proves too light. Public opinion is now the God with the scales. If I am an author, for

example, I (that is, my work) will be WEIGHED in the BALANCE (of public or of literary opinion) and found perhaps WANTING. Poor Ito was weighed many, many times, and found wanting — before being expelled. I am afraid he will be found wanting also by the world into which he must enter.

As for the phrase, "not a hair of their *head*," the singular is often used for the plural in the old English of the Bible, and other books. (To-day, we should use only the plural — as a general rule.)

Examples from the Bible

1. "The fire had no power upon their bodies, nor
singular
was the hair of *their* HEAD singed."
Daniel, 3d chap., 27th verse.
plural singular
2. "But the very hairs of your HEAD are all numbered." *Luke* 12. 7.
singular
3. "And he bowed the HEART of *all the men of Judah.*"
II Samuel 19. 14.

Poets to-day, or writers of poetical prose, may take similar liberties with grammar as that in No. 3.

There are very many quotations in the Bible about the words "weighed in the balance"; the most famous being that in the story of Belshazzar, in the book of Daniel. The first poetical use of the phrase is in the book of Job — supposed, you know, to have been written by an Arab, not a Jew.

Now I hope and pray that you will take good care

of yourself, and not allow your Samurai-spirit of self-denial to urge you into taking any risks on bitterly cold days. Many, many happy new years to you and yours. LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KUMAMOTO, *November*, 1891

DEAR PROFESSOR, — Your welcome postal to hand. One must travel out of Izumo after a long residence to find out how utterly different the place is from other places — for instance, this country. Matsue is incomparably prettier and better built and in every way more interesting than Kumamoto. What Kumamoto is religiously, I have not yet been able to find out. There are no shops here full of household shrines of hinoki-wood for sale, no display of shimenawa over doors, no charms in the fields, no o fuda pasted upon house-doors, no profusion of Shintō emblems, no certainty of seeing a kamidana or a butsudan in every house, and a strange scarcity of temples and images. Religiously, the place seems to be uninteresting; and to-day it is infernally cold. Everything is atrociously dear, and the charming simplicity of the Izumo folk does not here exist. My own people — four came with me — feel like fish out of water. My little wife said the other morning, with an amusing wonder in her eyes, that there was a mezurashii kedamono in the next yard. We looked out, and the extraordinary animal was a goat. Some geese were also a subject of wonder, and

a pig. None of these creatures are to be seen in Izumo.

About Inari. I may enquire again, but I think that the representation of Inari as a man with a beard, riding upon a white fox, in the pictures of Toyokuni, for instance, and in the sacred kakemono is tolerably good evidence. Also the relief carving I have seen representing him as a man. Also the general popular idea concerning him, about which there is no mistake. Also the letter of Hideyoshi to Inari Daimyōjin cited in Walter Dening's Readers, under the heading: "Hideyoshi's Letter to Gods."

As to Kwannon, it is true that in Buddhist history she figures both as a man and woman (as also does the daughter of the Serpent-King in the astounding sutra of the Lotus of the Good Law) — she is identified with the Sanscrit Avalokitesvara — about whose sex there may be some doubt. I have a translation of her Japanese sutra, in which she is female, however; — and in China and in Japan she has come to be considered the ideal of all that is sweet in womanliness, and her statues and the representations of her in the numerous pictures of the Buddhist pantheon are of a woman — maiden. And after all, the people, not the scholars, make the gods, and the gods they make are the best.

I cannot help thinking that the identification of the Japanese Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with those of India is not sufficiently specified by Eitel and others as an identification of origin only. They have

become totally transformed here — they have undergone perfect avatars, and are not now the same. Shaka, Amida, Yakushi, Fudō, Dainichi, etc., may have been in India distinct personalities: in Japan they are but forms of the One — as indeed are the innumerable Buddhas of the Lotus of the True Law. All are one. And Kshitigarbha is not our Japanese Jizō — and Kwannon is not Avalokitesvara, and the Ni-ō are not the figures of Indra, and Emma-O is not Yama. "They were and are not." Don't you agree with me that the popular idea of a divinity is an element of weight in such questions of doubt as we are chatting about?

With every wish that you may enjoy your journey in Shikoku, I remain, most truly ever

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. . . . I have been teaching three days, and find no difference in the boys from those of Izumo — they are gentle, polite, manly and eager. But I am greatly hampered by the books. There are not books enough, and the reading-books chosen are atrociously unsuited for the students. Fancy "Silas Marner" and "John Halifax," with the long double-compound complex semiphilosophical sentences of George Eliot, as textbooks for boys who can scarcely speak in English! A missionary's choice! Ye gods of old Japan! I think the Mombushō is economical in the wrong direction. Too much money cannot be spent on good reading-books. Less money on

buildings and more for books would give better results. Buildings worth a quarter of a million (as building costs in America), and "Lovell's Library" and "George Munro's" piracies bought for text-books. I could scream!!

TO MASANOBU ŌTANI

KUMAMOTO, *January*, 1892

DEAR ŌTANI, — Your long and most interesting letter gave me much pleasure, as well as much information. I am very glad to have had my questions so nicely answered; for I am writing an essay on Shintō home-worship in Izumo — all about the kamidana, etc. I know a good deal about general forms and rules, but very little about the reverence paid *in the house* to the family dead (forefathers, father, mother, dead children, etc.) — in Shintō, which is very interesting to know. I think much of the modern customs shows a Chinese origin, though the spirit of pure Shintō seems to be wholly Japanese.

I think your first explanation of the form of the omiki dokkuri no kuchi-sashi is the correct one — so far as this is concerned. I am not sure, but the shape is strikingly like that of the mystic jewel of Buddhist art. There is another form in brass, which I have, that seems intended to represent a folded paper; but I am not sure what it means.

Many thanks for your very valuable notes about the January customs. You told me quite a

number of things I did not know before — such as the rules about the twist of the straw-rope, and the symbolism of the charcoal and many other articles. But I would like to know why the pendent straws should be 3–5–7: is there any mystic signification in those numbers? I thought the Japanese mystic number was 8. . . .

Take good care of your health.

Ever very truly yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *January*, 1892

DEAR HENDRICK, — Your jolly letter just came — January 3rd — to find me celebrating the new year after the Japanese fashion. There is not one New Year's day here, but three. Over the gate, and all the alcoves of each apartment, the straw-rope (shimenawa), which is the Shintō emblem of the gods, is festooned; upon the kamidana, or "god-shelf," lights are burning before the tablets of those deities who have pledged themselves in Japanese ideographs to love and protect this foreigner — and I have given to them offerings of rice-cakes and sake. For the guests are dishes of raw fish, and others which it would take too long to describe, and hot sake. My little wife does the honours. Before the gate are Japanese flags and pine-trees — emblems of green old age and unflinching purpose.

— Well, here I am in Kyūshū, a thousand miles

and more south of Yokohama, at a salary of two hundred yen a month. All my Izumo servants came with me. Our house is not nearly so beautiful as that in Matsue, and the city is devilishly ugly and commonplace — an enormous, half-Europeanized garrison-town, full of soldiers. I don't like it; but Lord! I must try to make money, for nothing is sure in Japan, and I am now so tied down to the country that I can't quit it, except for a trip, whether the Government employs me or not. I have nine lives depending on my work — wife, wife's mother, wife's father, wife's adopted mother, wife's father's father, and then servants, and a Buddhist student. How would *you* like that? It would n't do in America. But it is nothing here — no appreciable burden. The *moral* burden, however, is heavy enough. You can't let a little world grow up around you, to depend on you, and then break it all up — not if you are a respectable person. And I indulge in the luxury of "filial piety" — a virtue of which the good and evil results are only known to us Orientals.

I translated into Hearnian dialect all you said. And my wife, whose name is Setsu, or Chi-yo (alternative), knows you well by your photograph, and said such nice things about that photograph that I dare not tell you. Which is all the more extraordinary because when I showed her some pictures of "distinguished foreigners" she and the girls all said that if they should ever meet such people they would "become Buddhas for fear" — i.e., die of fright.

American and English faces — their deep-set eyes — terrify unsophisticated Japanese. Children cry with fear at the sight of a foreigner. So your photo must reveal exceptional qualities to make such an impression. . . .

Everybody gets drunk here to-day; but a cultivated Japanese is never offensively drunk. To get *properly*, politely drunk upon sake is the summum bonum. . . . Although a gentleman knows how to act, however drunk, it is the custom, when your host makes you drunker than usual (which delights him), to call at the house next morning, and thank him for the entertainment — at the same time apologizing for any *possible* mistakes. Of course, there are no ladies at men's dinners — only professional dancing-girls, maiko or geisha.

Work progresses; but the barrier of language is a serious one. My project to study Buddhism must be indefinitely delayed on that account. For the deeper mysteries of Buddhism cannot be explained in the Hearnian dialect.

What some people say about Miss Bisland — ah! I mean Mrs. Wetmore — being only beautiful when she wants to be is, I think, perfectly true. She can change into seventeen different women. She used to make me almost believe the stories about Circe and Lilith. She laughed to scorn the terrible scientific test of the photograph — of the science which reveals new nebulæ and tells a man in advance whether he is going to get the small-pox or not No

two photos of her ever represented the same human being. In ordinary mortals the sort of thing called *Ego*, which is not "I" but "They," is worked up into a recognizable composite photo. But in her case, 't is quite otherwise. The different dead that live in her, live quite separately from each other, in different rooms, and receive upon different afternoons. And yet — if even Rudyard Kipling were to write the truth about that person — or rather that ghostly congregation of persons called Elizabeth Bisland — who but a crazy man would believe that truth? Assuredly Mr. W. ought to think himself lucky. Ever to get tired of Elizabeth is out of human possibility. There are too many different Elizabeths, belonging to different historical epochs, countries, and conditions. If he should tire of one Elizabeth — lo! there will appear another. And there is one very terrible Elizabeth, whom I had a momentary glimpse of once, and whom it will not be well for Mr. W. or anybody else to summon from her retirement. But I am glad for the compound Elizabeth that she has this Protector in reserve. — Lord! how irreverently I have been talking! But that is because you can read under the irreverence. . . .

What can't be insured against is earthquake. I have become afraid. Do you know that the earthquake the other day in Gifu, Aichi, etc., destroyed nearly 200,000 houses and nearly 10,000 lives? My house in far-off Matsue rocked and groaned like a steamer in a typhoon. It is n't the quake one's

afraid of: it is being held down under a ton of timber and slowly burned alive. That is what happened to most of the dead. Five millions of dollars will scarcely relieve the distress. . . .

Well, here's a thousand happy New Years to you and yours — all luck, all blessings, all glorious sensations.

Ever from your old disoccidentalized chum

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *April*, 1892

DEAR HENDRICK, — Just had a long and delightful letter from you, and Mallock's book. I hate the Jesuit; but he has a particular cleverness of his own indeed. I hate him first because he is insincere, as you suggest; then I hate him because he is morbid, with a priestly morbidness — sickly, cynical, unhealthy. I like Kipling's morbidness, which is manly and full of enormous resolve and defiance in the teeth of God and hell and nature — but the other — no! This book is not free from the usual faults. It is like Paul Bourget boiled into thin soup, and flavoured with a dash of M. de Camors. The Markham girl was certainly Feuillet's imagination; but she is excellently done. Really, I don't know; — I asked myself: "If it was I?" . . . And conscience answered: "If it was *you*, in spite of love and duty and honour and hellfire staring you in the face you would have gone after her — and tried to console

yourself by considering the Law of Attraction of Bodies and Souls in the incomprehensible cosmical order of things, which is older than the gods." And I was very much inclined to demur; but conscience repeated: "Oh! don't be such a liar and quibbler; — you know you would! That was the only part of the book you really liked. Your ancestors were not religious people: you lack constitutional morality. That's why you are poor, and unsuccessful, and void of mental balance, and an exile in Japan. You know you cannot be happy in an English moral community. You are a fraud — a vile Latin — a vicious French-hearted scalawag."

And I could not say anything, because what conscience observed was true — to a considerable extent. "Vive le monde antique!"...

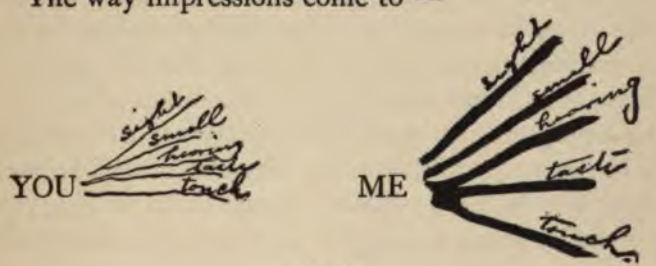
I have been thinking a heap, because of being much alone. (The Japanese do not understand Western thought at all — at least not its emotional side. Therefore devour time and devour thought even while they stimulate it.)...

Now about these Shadows. Yes, there are forces about one — vague, working soundlessly, imperceptibly, softening one as the action of air softens certain surfaces of rock while hardening others. The magnetism of another faith about you necessarily polarizes that loose-quivering needle of desire in a man that seeks source of attraction in spite of synthetic philosophy. The general belief in an infinite past and future interpenetrates one some-

how. When you find children who do wrong are always warned, "Ah! your future birth will be unhappy"; when you find two lovers drinking death together, and leaving behind them letters saying, "This is the influence of our last birth, when we broke our promise to become husband and wife"; and last, but not least, when some loving woman murmurs, laughingly: "In the last life thou wert a woman and I a man, and I loved thee much; but thou didst not love me at all" — you begin to doubt if you do not really believe like everybody else.

About the training of the senses. The idea is admirable, but *alas!* — a very clever Frenchman five years ago, in the "Revue Politique et Littéraire," almost exhausted it. He represented a man who had cultivated his eye so that he could see the bacteria in the air, and the grain of metals — also being able to adjust his eyes to distance. He had trained his ear so as to hear all sounds of growth and decomposition. He had trained his nose to smell all substances supposed to have no smell. He made a diagram of the five senses thus:

The way impressions come to —



I translated it for the "Times-Democrat."
For a little while, good-bye and best happiness.
LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, 1892

DEAR E. H., — . . . Your thoughts about the Shadows of the East are touching. You ought to be able to write something beautiful and quite new if you had time. . . .

You have been seized by the fascination of monstrous cities built up to heaven, and eternally sending their thunder to the smoke-blacked sky — cities where we live by machinery. I can shudder now only to think of walking down a street between miles of houses two hundred feet high, with a roaring of traffic through them as of a torrent in a cañon. And that fascination means elegance, fashion, social duties. . . . I have been trying to deal with these two problems: "What has been the moral value of Christianity to mankind?" and "Why is Western civilization still in slavery to religious hypocrisy?" The answer to the former seems to be that without the brutal denial of the value of life and pleasure by Christianity, we could never have learned that the highest enjoyments are, after all, intellectual, and that progress can be effected only by self-sacrifice to interest and indifference to physical gratifications. And the latter question, though I have not yet solved it, seems to suggest that the hypocrisy itself

may have large hidden value — may be in process of transmutation into a truth.

Yes, Japanese women are all that your question implies you would wish them to be. They are children, of course. They perceive every possible shade of thought — vexation, doubt, or pleasure — as it passes over the face; and they know all you do not tell them. If you are unhappy about anything, then they say: "I will pray to the Kami-sama for my lord" — and they light a little lamp, and clap their hands and pray. And the ancient gods hearken unto them; and the heart of the foreign barbarian is therewith lightened and made luminous with sunshine. And he orders the merchants of curious textures to bring their goods to the house, which they do — piling them up like mountains; and there is such choice that the pleasure of the purchase is dampened by the sense of inability to buy everything in this world. And the merchants, departing, leave behind them dreams in little Japanese brains of beautiful things to be bought next year.

Also Japanese women have curious Souls. The other day in Nagano, a politician told a treacherous lie. Whereupon his wife robed herself all in white as those are robed who are about to journey to the world of ghosts, and purified her lips according to the holy rite, and, taking from the storeroom an ancient family sword, thereupon slew herself. And she left a letter, regretting that she had but one life to give in expiation of the shame and the wrong of

that lie. And the people do now worship at her grave, and strew flowers thereupon, and pray for daughters with hearts as brave. . . . But the worms are eating her.

Because you sent me that horrid book, I revenge myself. I send you a much more horrid book. But if you do not enjoy it, I shall commit hara kiri, or seppuku, which is the polite name. And a woman wrote it — a woman! Christopher Columbus! what a *terrible* woman she must be! . . .

The "tract" you sent is giving much amusement to friends here. Send anything *really* good of that sort you can find: it makes life happier for the exile.

I am not easy about my book, of which I now await the proofs. It lacks colour — it is n't like the West Indian book. But the world here is not forceful: it is all washed in faint blues and greys and greens. There are really gamboge, or saffron-coloured valleys — and lilac fields; but these exist only in the early summer and the rape-plant season, and ordinarily Japan is chromatically spectral. My next book will probably be on Buddhism in common life.

You write me delightful letters, which, alas! I can't answer. Well, they are not answerable in themselves. They are thinking. I can only say this about one point: the isolation ought — unless you are physically tired by the day's work — to prove of value. All the best work is done the way ants do things — by tiny but tireless and regular additions. I would n't recommend introspection — except in

commentary. You *must* see interesting life. Of course only in flashes and patches. But preserve in writing the memory of these. In a year you will be astounded to find them self-arranging, kaleidoscopically, into something symmetrical — and trying to live. Then play God, and breathe into the nostrils— and be astonished and pleased.

Lovingly ever yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO PAGE M. BAKER

KUMAMOTO, *June*, 1892

DEAR PAGE, — To-day, second of June, your kind letter came, enclosing a draft for £163; and I write in haste to catch the mail. . . . And now, ten thousand thanks, from the bottom of my much-scarified heart.

I am sorry I did not get the "Times-Democrat," as it would have helped me to get out my book quicker — my first book. It ought to be out this Fall; and I think it will be tolerably large — a little larger than "Two Years in the French West Indies"; but it is only an introductory book.

Really, it is very queer; but you seem to be the best friend I've got outside of Japan. You really do things for a fellow — great big things; and nobody else seems inclined to do much of anything. . . .

I send you to-day a better photo of my little wife, and some other things; and you will shortly get a copy of Chamberlain's "Things Japanese" I have

ordered for you. . . . As for making a present to Setsu (that is her name in Japanese; in Chinese Chi-yo, or Tchi-yo [1]), I don't think you could send her anything Western she would understand. And I would not wish you to take so much trouble. The best thing you can do to please her is to be good to me. She has really everything she wants (you know Japanese women wear no earrings, necklaces, or jewelry as ours do); and what she really wants is only made in Japan; and I am wickedly trying to keep her as innocent of foreign life as possible. So whenever she shows a liking even for foreign textures (many are now thrown on the market) I persuade her that Japanese goods are twice as pretty and durable, and for fear she might not believe me I usually manage to find some Japanese stuff that really is much better than the foreign article on sale. . . .

Oh, about distances. I am in Kyūshū, the southern island, you know — very far from Tōkyō, and by the route much farther than as the crow flies. What I meant by two thousand miles south of Tōkyō was the Loochoo Islands. You know they belong to Japan, but perhaps I am wrong as to distance. The Loochoo Islands compose what is called Okinawa Ken (ken is province). . . . I find I shall not be able to go to Loochoo this summer, however; I must make studies somewhere else for a new book.

[1] (Like Tchi-Nim?) — It means "Life-for-a-Thousand-Years" — a name of good omen.

Of course you will get my book as soon as it comes out.

In that book you will find a good deal about what you ask in relation to my way of living, etc. But as to eating, I have said very little. The fact is I lived for one year exclusively on Japanese food, which Europeans, among others Mr. Chamberlain, consider almost impossible. I must confess, however, that it broke me down. After twelve months I could not eat at all. You know Japanese food is raw fish and fresh fish, rice, bean-curds (they look like custard), seaweed, dried cuttle-fish — rarely chicken or eggs. In short, of five hundred Japanese dishes, the basis is rice, fish, beans, lotus, various vegetables, including bamboo shoots, and seaweed. Confectionery is eaten between meals only, and sparingly. Tea is never allowed to become strong: it is a pale straw-colour, without sugar or milk, and once used to it, you cannot bear the sight of European tea any more. But I had to return to the flesh-pots of Egypt. I now eat Japanese food only once a day; and morning and evening indulge in beef-steak, bread, and Bass's Ale.

One becomes fond of Japanese sake (rice-wine); but it can only be eaten with Japanese food. A barrel of the best costs about three dollars and a half. It is extremely deceiving. It looks like lemonade; but it is heavy as sherry. Happily it has not the after-effects of sherry. There is no liquor in the world upon which a man becomes so quickly in-

toxicated, and yet none of which the effects last so short a time. The intoxication is pleasant as the effect of opium or hasheesh. It is a soft, pleasant, luminous exhilaration: everything becomes brighter, happier, lighter; — then you get very sleepy. At Japanese dinners it is the rule to become slightly exhilarated; but not to drink enough to talk thickly, or walk crooked. The ability to drink at banquets requires practice — long practice. With European wines, the rule is, I believe, that hearty eating prevents the drink from taking too much effect. But with Japanese sake it is exactly the opposite. There are banquets of many kinds, and the man who is invited to one at which extensive drinking may be expected is careful to start in upon an empty, or almost empty, stomach. By not eating one can drink a good deal. The cups are very small and of many curious shapes; but one may be expected to empty fifty. A quart of sake is a good load; two quarts require iron nerves to stand. But among the Japanese there are wonderful drinkers. At a military officer's banquet a captain offered me a tumbler holding a good pint of sake — I almost fainted at the sight of it; for it was only the first. But a friend said to me: "Only drink a little, and pass it back" — which I did. Stronger heads emptied cup after cup like water. "Oh, that is nothing," my friend said; "wait till you see an old-fashioned cup." He showed me something like a wash-basin for size — a beautiful lacquered bowl,

holding, I should guess, at the very least a quart and a half. "A valiant warrior was expected," he said, "to swallow this at one draft, and wait for more." I should not like to attempt it, unless I were suffering very badly from chills and fever. When very tired and cold, one can drink a great deal of sake without harm.

About my every-day life. Well, it is the simplest and most silent of lives — in a simple Japanese house. I use one chair, only for writing at a high table on account of my eyes. Most of my life I spend squatting on the floor. Europeans can seldom get used to this; but it has become second nature to me.

I always wear Japanese clothes in the house, of course. We rest, eat, talk, read, and sleep on the floor. But then, you do not know, perhaps, what a Japanese floor is. It is like a great soft mattress: the real floor is covered by heavy mats, fitted to one another like mattresses set edge to edge; and these cannot be lifted up except by a workman: they are really part of the building. Then this floor is spotlessly clean. No dust is ever suffered upon it — not a speck. Therefore we live barefooted in summer, or wearing only stockings in winter. The bed consists of a series of heavy quilts of pretty colours — like very thick comforts, piled one upon the other on the floor. By day these are rolled up and stowed out of sight. So in a Japanese house you see no furniture — only in some recess, a graceful vase, and one kakemono, or hanging picture painted on silk.

That is all — except the smoking-box (hibachi) in the middle of the room, surrounded by kneeling-cushions. In the evening the Japanese bath is ready. It is *almost* scalding always — hard to get used to; but the best in the world because you can't take cold after it. It consists of an immense tub, with a little furnace *in* it which heats the water. For amusements we have the Japanese theatres, the street-festivals, visits of friends, Japanese newspapers, occasional pilgrimages to curious places, and — delight of delights in some cities — *shopping*, Japanese shopping.

Bad boys — and not obliged to give good and great moral examples — people who are not strictly moral in their virtues like you and me — sometimes hire geisha or dancing girls to amuse them. . . .

At all banquets — except those of teachers here — there are geisha. When you sit down (I mean kneel down) to eat, a band of beautiful girls come in to wait upon you, with exquisite voices, and beautiful dresses, etc. These are geisha. After a while they dance. If you wish to fall in love with them, you may. . . .

In Matsue I often saw geisha dance: they were at all banquets. But at teachers' banquets in Kumamoto they are not allowed. We are strictly moral in Kyūshū. . . .

Lo! — it's nearly time to close the mail for the outgoing steamer. So, dear Page, I must conclude for the moment in great haste.

TO PAGE M. BAKER

With best regards to Mrs. Baker, best remembrances and gratitude to you, excuse this scrawl, and believe me ever faithfully

Your friend LAFCADIO HEARN

Really, it seems to me as if I had n't thanked you at all. You are simply divine about doing kind things. My little wife sends you this greeting with her own hand —

萬歲

It means: "May you live a thousand years!"

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KAGAWA, SAKAI, *August*, 1892

DEAR NISHIDA, — . . . It made us both very happy to hear you had been persuaded to stop at our little house; for although it is hot and small, still you would feel more homelike there, with Izumo folk, than at the big dreary hotels of Kumamoto. I hope you will be able to stop a little while with us now at Mionoseki.

I like Oki very, very much — much better than Kumamoto. I like country people, fishermen, sailors, primitive manners, simple ways: all these delight me, and they are in Oki. To watch the life and customs of those people is very pleasant, and would be profitable to me in a literary way if I had time to spare. Oki is worth six months' literary

study for me. I hope to see it again. The only unpleasant thing is the awful smell of the cuttle-fish. But I will tell you all my impressions when we meet. . . .

With kindest regards from myself and Setsu — hoping to see you soon, as ever

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

MIONOSEKI, *August*, 1892

DEAR NISHIDA, — We felt quite lonesome after you went away, and especially at supper-time — when there were only two mats, instead of three, laid upon the suzumi-dai, overlooking the bay, and the twinkling of the Golden Dragon.

Next morning the water was rough, and made a great noise; and I said, "That is because Nishida San has sent us some eggs." But in the afternoon the bay again became like a mirror; and I succeeded in teaching Masayoshi to lie on his back in the water. Quite late in the afternoon the little Sakai Maru came in, and brought a magnificent box of eggs, and your letter, and a copy of the "Nippon."

You are too good; and I felt not less pleased to find myself so kindly remembered than sorry to think of the trouble you took for us. But the eggs were more than welcome. The landlord cooked them in a little quadrangular pan; and each one looked like a Japanese flag, with the Red Sun in the middle. A thousand thanks to you, and to your

kindest mother — and to all your family warmest regards.

By the way, speaking of the Great Deity of Mionoseki, last evening we had a good laugh at the arguments of a clever barber, who came to cut my kappa-hair. I noticed he had a soldier's belt instead of an obi. I questioned him, through Setsu; and found he had been many years in the army. In the army they gave the soldiers eggs; and he hated eggs at first. But he learned to eat them, and found that they made him stronger. Whenever he ate many eggs, he could blow his bugle much better. Then he became fond of eggs. Still he gets his friends secretly to send him eggs; and the Great Deity of Mionoseki is not angry. He says: "What nonsense! Suppose the Cock *did* crow at the wrong hour, is not Koto-shiro-nushi no Mikoto a Kami-sama? — and how are we to believe that a Kami-sama does not know the right time? And suppose the wanizame did bite him — then it is at the wani-zame he ought to have been angry — not at the Cock. I don't believe Koto-shiro-nushi no Kami could be so foolish. Indeed it is very wrong to tell such a story about him. I like eggs. I pity the people of Mionoseki, who do not know the rare pleasure of eating a well-cooked egg" (etc., etc.). "If the Deity was angry with the Cock, he should have eaten him." . . .

With many grateful regards

Ever most truly LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

November, 1892

DEAR OLD FELLOW, — . . . What a beastly nightmare that woman who married the preacher! High-pressure civilization only produces these types. — But, Lord! what is to be the end? . . . The race will still be to the mentally strong as well as to the physically strong. But the women fit for fertile maternity, and equally fit to discuss the fourth dimension of space, are yet rare — and apt to be a little terrible. The cost of intellectual race-expansion is more terrible — is frightful; and then the expansion cannot *ever* become universal. The many must profit by the few. To make 1 of the few, there must be, I suppose, at least 111,111 of such monstrosities created as that one you wrote of.

Is n't the hunger for the eternal feminine much like the other hunger? — to be completely exorcised in the same way. Marriage seems to me the certain destruction of all that emotion and suffering — so that one afterwards looks back at the old times with wonder. One cannot dream or desire anything more after love is transmuted into the friendship of marriage. It is like a haven from which you can see the dangerous sea-currents, running like violet bands beyond you out of sight. It seems to me (though I'm a poor judge of such matters) that it does n't make a man any happier to have an intellectual wife — unless he marries for society. The less in-

tellectual, the more lovable: so long as there is neither coarseness nor foolishness. For intellectual converse a man *can't* have really with women: womanhood is antagonistic to it. And emotional truth is quite as plain to the childish mind as to the mind of Herbert Spencer or of Clifford. The child and the god come equally near to the eternal truth. But then marriage in a complex civilization is really a terrible problem: there are so *many* questions involved.

Oh! — *you* talk of being without intellectual companionship! O ye Eight Hundred Myriads of Gods! What would you do if you were me. Lo! the illusion is gone! — Japan in Kyūshū is like Europe; — except I have no friend. The differences in ways of thinking, and the difficulties of language, render it impossible for an *educated* Japanese to find pleasure in the society of a European. Here is an astounding fact. The Japanese child is as close to you as the European child — perhaps closer and sweeter, because infinitely more natural and naturally refined. Cultivate his mind, and the more it is cultivated, the *further you push him* from you. Why? Because there the race-antipodalism shows itself. As the Oriental thinks naturally to the left where we think to the right, the more you cultivate him the more strongly will he think in the opposite direction from you. Finis sweetness, sympathy, friendship. Now, my scholars in this great Government school are not boys, but men. They speak to me only in

class. The teachers never speak to me at all. I go to the college (two miles away) by jinrikisha and return after class — always alone, no mental company but books. But at home everything is sweet.

At the college there is always a recess of half an hour at noon, for dining. I do not dine, but climb the hill behind the college. There is a grey old cemetery, where the "rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." From between the tombs I can look down on the Dai Go Kōtō Chūgakkō, with its huge modern brick buildings and its tumultuous life, as in a bird's-eye view. I am only there never alone. For Buddha sits beside me, and also looks down upon the college through his half-closed eyelids of stone. There is moss on his nose and his hands — moss on his back, of course! And I always say to him: "O Master, what do you think of all this? — is it not vanity? There is no faith there, no creed, no thought of the past life nor of the future life, nor of Nirvana — only chemistry and cube-geometry and trigonometry — and the most damnable 'English language.'" He never answers me; but he looks very sad — smiles just like one who has received an injury which he cannot return — and you know that is the most pathetic of all smiles. And the snakes twist before my feet as I descend to the sound of the bell. — There is my only companion for you! but I like him better than those who look like him waiting for me in the classroom. Ever with best regards

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, *January*, 1893

DEAR NISHIDA, — I do not know how to thank you enough for your last letter; — indeed I must tell you frankly that I felt ashamed of having put you to such trouble involuntarily, for I had no idea how complicated the matter was when I wrote to you for information about the origin of the belief. And now let me beg of you never to take so much trouble again on my account. I think I can hear you protesting that it was only a pleasure. I am sure it was a pleasure to help me; but I am too much of a literary man not to know exactly the time-cost of the work, especially in a language not your own. So I will again beg you not to take so much trouble for me at any future time — as it would cause me pain.

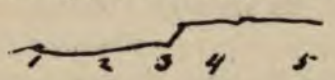
And now let me say something else about other letters. You spoke of *mistakes*. Do you know that I think your letters are very wonderful? There are extremely few mistakes; and there are very seldom even incorrectnesses in the use of idioms. This is rare in Japan. Very few Japanese, even among those who have been abroad, can write an informal letter without mistakes of a serious kind. You write letters much as a well-educated German or Frenchman would — showing only rarely, by some unfamiliar turn of expression, by the elision of a preposition, or (but this is very seldom indeed) by a sudden change of tense, that it is not an Englishman who writes.

And in a few years more, even these little signs will disappear. It is very wonderful to me to see how a few Japanese have been able to master English without ever leaving Japan.

A point of much value to me in your explanation was the fact that too many souls are held to be as bad as too few. I had imagined the opposite to be the case, and had so written. But as I put the statement into the mouth of a story-teller, it will read all right enough; and I can correct the erroneous impression by a footnote.

There is rejoicing here over the non-abolition of the school. Your predictions have been well fulfilled. Several new books I recommended have been adopted; but there were changes made in my list, I think for the worse. Kingsley's "Greek Heroes" (Ginn, Heath & Co.'s school-text edition) has been adopted for the younger class. I recommended this book for the extreme purity and simplicity of its English, which reads like a song. I tried to get "Cuore" adopted, but could not succeed: they said it was "too childish." I tried Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome"; and that I think they will get. Then some classic texts — Burke's Essays (selected) were adopted instead of a volume of stories I proposed. They adopted also "The Book of Golden Deeds," a volume of anecdotes of virtue and courage. As for my own classes, they still give me no books at all; and I teach entirely by word of mouth and chalk. Still, con-

sidering the short time given to each class, I believe this is best. The main thing is to teach them to express themselves in English without books to help them. I have noticed that at one period of the course there is always a sudden improvement, as if there had been also a sudden development of intelligence — between the third and fourth class. It corresponds to a change of capacity I noticed also in the Jinjō Chūgakkō. It might be indicated by lines, thus:



Between 3 and 4 the increase of power is like a leap. But after that (in the higher schools) I don't think there is much progress. Thereafter I fancy that in most cases the highest capacity has been reached, and then the strain comes. The students attempt to do on rice and gruel what foreign students can only do on beef, eggs, puddings, heavy nutritious diet. In the eternal order of things the overstrain comes. The higher education will not give the desired results for at least another generation — because the physique of the student must be raised to meet it. The higher education requires a physiological change — an increase of brain capacity in actual development of tissue, an increase of nervous energy, and consequently a higher standard of living. That there have been wonderful exceptions in Japanese scholarship makes no difference: it is a question of general averages. The student of to-day is not

sufficiently strong and sufficiently nourished to bear the tremendous strain put upon him at the higher schools and the university. Wherefore he loses some of his best qualities in mere effort. The higher schools don't feed their boys well — not so well by half as the Government feeds the soldiers. At least so I have been assured. . . . Yours faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, *January*, 1893

DEAR NISHIDA, — Your charming letter has just come, full of news and things to be grateful for. There is some news here too. Mr. Kano is gone! We are all very, very sorry. . . .

Perhaps I might go to Niigata during the summer. Setsu is always, always, always talking about Tōkyō. I suppose I shall have to take her there. And I want to visit Kompira, and Zenkōji in Nagano (?) — where all the Souls of the Dead go — and one might do all that and see Niigata too. I am very anxious to see the dear kind Governor and his daughter again. That kind of Governor is rare, and I think will soon cease to exist in Japan. He always seemed to me a delightful type of the old days — like the princes of the ehon: the modernized Governor scarcely seems to belong to the same race. And the Japanese of the next generation will not be kind and open-hearted and unselfish, I fear: they will become hard of character like the Western people —

more intellectual and less moral. For old Japan, in unselfishness, was as far in advance of the West as she was materially behind it.

The curling-up of the toe in the statue of Inada-Hime is not according to the canons of Western sculpture (which is still generally governed by the Greek spirit) — because it shows the member in what is considered an ungraceful position. But I thought after looking awhile at it, that it was really natural. Not natural from the standpoint of a modern people whose toes have lost both symmetry and flexibility owing to the wearing of leather shoes; but natural among a people whose feet are well shaped and whose toes remain supple, and to some degree, prehensile. Among tropical races the toes retain extraordinary flexibility; but I don't think any English girl could put her great-toe into the attitude taken by that of Inada-Hime. I imagined that this movement represented in the statue a little nervous feeling — the involuntary shrinking of a woman from sharp cold steel. But that is only a guess. What it really means I should like to know.

I forgot in another letter to tell you that Herbert Spencer, in one of his recent volumes ("Individual Life") severely criticized some of the Mombushō Readers and other publications as immoral — because appealing to the desire of revenge and the passion of hatred and bloodshed. . . . One thing is certain, that Readers for Japanese students ought to be edited in Japan, and edited in a particular man-

ner with especial reference to national character and feeling. I prize the Mombushō Readers, because I learn so much from them; but as textbooks they are not well written, and they do not appeal to the student's natural love of novelty. It is hopeless to interest boys in stories they know already by heart in their own language. They want what is new and strange and beautiful. — But no thanks will ever be given to the man who tries to do the work well; and his work itself will almost certainly be spoiled by the emendations and interpolations of a committee of men without knowledge or taste — unless the thing should be done quite independently of officialdom.

I am trying to teach Setsu English by a fast memory-system. I can't tell whether I will succeed or not: if I find it strains her too much I must stop — for the system is exhausting. In the course of teaching I notice something of what you tell me about Izumo pronunciation. It makes the difficulty much greater.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *February*, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK, — This is not going to be a pleasant letter — though it may have interest for you. I don't hesitate to tell my friends about shadows as well as lights, and I rather think the latter alone would cease to be interesting. Besides, we are all most interested in what most closely relates to the

realities of life; and the realities of life are ugly to no small degree. Dreams are realities — of desire for things out of reach; but the diet of dreams is not substantial enough for the sense of friendship to live upon. So here goes for the lamentations — or as a Frenchman would say, a jérémiade. . . .

I might cite a fourth, a fifth; — but happily there are lights. I made one delightful friend here, Professor Chamberlain, and I told you about Major McDonald. . . .

I am perfectly conscious that to a thorough man of the world I must be only a contemptible fool. Even to a friend like you who are not spoiled and cannot be spoiled by your milieu, I must seem something of a fool. Be that as it may — here I am. Now what is this fool to do? . . .

Suppose I should seek a place as teacher of English literature. Everybody thinks he can teach English literature, and the public does n't care particularly: it takes its pabulum largely on trust. On whose trust? Oh! the trust of the trustees — and the respectable people. Now I am not respectable. I am under the odium theologicum of every Christian faith. Small and mean as I am, I am spotted. Don't imagine this is vanity! It does n't require any greatness to be spotted. It is just like a prostitute trying to become an honest woman, or a convicted thief endeavouring to get employment. There is nothing great about it. If I had any position worth hunting up, the cry would be raised that

an atheist, a debauchee, a disreputable ex-reporter was corrupting the morals of the young under pretence of teaching literature. That is position No. 3. As Fiske says, the heretic is not now burned at the stake; but there is an organized policy to starve him by injuring his reputation and lying about him. And even Fiske (because he is poor) dares not take the whole position of Spencer.

But I don't want to pretend myself a martyr for any worthy cause. I am not. I am *not respectable:* that is the whole matter — and the pardoning influence of women would never be exerted for me, because I am physically disagreeable — and what I could win by my own merit I could not keep, because I have no aggressiveness and no cunning. And I am only now learning all this — with my hair grey. There is no chance of becoming independent, as I will never be allowed to hold a position that pays well. I shall never be able to do my best in literary matters; for I shall never have the leisure, the means, or the opportunities of travel I want. . . .

To all this jérémiade, then, you must think for reply, in the words of Herbert Spencer: "My dear friend, the first necessity for success in life is to be a good animal. As an animal you don't work well at all. Furthermore you are out of harmony mentally and morally with the life of society: you represent broken-down tissue. There is some good in the ghostly part of you, but it would never have

been developed under comfortable circumstances. Hard knocks and intellectual starvation have brought your miserable little animula into some sort of shape. It will never have full opportunity to express itself, doubtless; but perhaps that is better. It might otherwise make too many mistakes; and it has not sufficient original force to move the sea of human mind to any storm of aspiration. Perhaps, in some future state of — " But here Spencer stops. . . .

I think civilization is a fraud, because I don't like the hopeless struggle. If I were very rich I should perhaps think quite differently — or, what would be still more rational, try not to think at all about it. Religion under an empire preaches the divinity of autocracy; under a monarchy, the divinity of aristocracy. In this industrial epoch it is the servant of the monster business, and is paid to declare that religion is governed by God, and business by religion — "whoever says the contrary, let him be anathema!" Business has its fixed standard of hypocrisy; everything above or below that is to be denounced by the ministers of the gospel of God and business. Hence the howl about Jay Gould, who, with splendid brutal frankness, exposed to the entire universe the real laws of business — without any preaching at all — and overrode society and law and became supreme. Wherefore I hold that a statue should be erected to him. Here we have been having a newspaper fight. All the missionaries are

down on "that anonymous writer" as usual. I wrote an article to prove that Gould was the grandest moral teacher of the century. Even sermons were preached in Tōkyō denouncing the writer of that article. I was accused of declaring that the end justified the means. I had not said so; but I quoted American authorities to show Gould had created and made effective the railroad-transportation system of the West; and then I quoted English financial authorities to prove that that very transportation system alone was now saving the United States from bankruptcy. The facts were unanswerable (at least by the clerics); and they proved that in order to get power to save a whole nation from ruin — Gould had to ruin a few thousand people. Wherefore I am called "immoral, low, beastly." Nobody *knows* it is I; but some suspect. I am already deemed the "moral plague-spot" of Japan by the dear missionaries. Next week I'll try them with an article on "The Abomination of Civilization." . . .

But I have at home a little world of about eleven people, to whom I am Love and Light and Food. It is a very gentle world. It is only happy when I am happy. If I even look tired, it is silent, and walks on tiptoe. It is a moral force. I dare not fret about anything when I can help it — for others would fret more. So I try to keep right. My little wife and I have saved nearly two thousand Japanese dollars between us. I think I'll be able to make her in-

dependent. When I've done that, I can let the teaching go, and wander about awhile, and write "sketches" at ten dollars per page.

Ever affectionately

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *April*, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . You never wrote a more wonderful letter than that last letter full of penetrating things. Now one of my shortcomings is a total ignorance of practical worldly wisdom; — for instance, I could not sit down and talk to a man in polite enigmas which both of us would understand, at all. All that world of business is to me a mystery and a marvel incomprehensible. Moreover, it is the revelation of mental powers of a very subtle order, as much beyond me as mathematics — so that I cannot but respect the forces manifested, even if I deplore the directions in which they are sometimes exercised. Your sketch of the two men, and the interview, and psychological relations was perfectly delicious — and like nearly everything you write to me, gave me the pleasure of a novel sensation. . . .

Your criticism about ——'s criticism was not exactly what I though you might make: — it *is* true that we like to be thought, and to believe ourselves, capable of doing vast harm, and credit ourselves more for our goodness perhaps on account of that

belief. But I don't agree with you in thinking the remark uncomplimentary. I think it was true, and in the sense I take it, beautiful. Ask yourself could you really do anything you knew to be terribly cruel under any personal provocation, — at least after the first burst of sudden anger was over? And you will find you *could not*. Any nature sincerely sympathetic — with a complex nerve-system — cannot inflict pain without receiving at least as much, if not more pain than it gives. I believe you could kill a man, under just provocation; but that is not bad, or cruel — indeed, it might be a duty. The terrible men are the men who do everything in cold blood, icily, with calculation, infinite patience, and infinite pleasure. But the capacity to be thus dangerous means also a low development of those qualities which give sweetness to character and amiability to life — and chivalry to a man's soul.

Now here is the very immortal side of Western civilization. Being wholly aggressive and selfish, the hard, cold qualities of character are being prodigiously developed by it. The emotional qualities, you might suggest, are also indirectly developed by the suffering the others inflict; — there is action and reaction. Yes, that is true. But the terrible men — the men of the type of that manager — represent not only a constantly increasing class, but a leading one — the class whose name is Power. Now Power multiplies. In wealth and luxury multiplication is

rapid and facile. They are less fertile comparatively than other classes; but the cost of their individuality is infinitely greater, and one type can outlive, outwork, outplan a hundred of the emotional sort — as a general rule. The ultimate tendency is to settle all power in the hands of those without moral scruple. It may take another few centuries to do this; but the tendency is obvious, and the danger is steadily growing. I think the West can never become as moral as the Orient. But it may become infinitely more wicked.

This is one way of seeing the matter. Another I wrote you about in my last letter — the sexual question in the West — something never dreamed of in the East. What must be the ultimate results of this Western worship of the Eternal Feminine? Must not one be, the contempt of old age, and universal irreverence for things the most naturally deserving of reverence? Already, in the West, the Family has almost ceased to exist.

To an Oriental it seems utterly monstrous that grown-up children should not live with their father, mother, and grandparents, and support and love them more than their own children, wives, or husbands. It seems to him sheer wickedness that a man should not love his mother-in-law — or that he should love his own wife even half as well as his own father or mother. Our whole existence seems to him disgustingly immoral. He would deem worthy of death the man who wrote —

He stood on his head on the wild seashore,
And joy was the cause of the act; —
For he felt, as he never had felt before,
Insanely glad, in fact.
And why? Because on that selfsame day
His mother-in-law had sailed
To a tropical climate, far away,
Where tigers and snakes prevailed.

He first most loves his father — then his mother — then his father-in-law and mother-in-law — then his children — and lastly, his wife. His wife is not of the family proper — a stranger — not of the blood of the ancestors — how can he love her like his own parents!

Now I half suspect the Oriental is right.

To him the people of the West with their novels and poems about love seem a race of very lascivious people. If indeed he should think more kindly of them at all, it would be through pity — as a race of sexually starved beings, frantic with nymphomania and all forms of erotomania, through refusal to obey the laws of nature. "They talk about their wives! — they write novels about their lusts! — they do not support their parents! — they do not obey their mothers-in-law! Truly they are savages!" Now they write love-stories in Japan. But who are the women of these love-stories? Dancing-girls. "If one must write stories about the passion of sex, let him at least not write such things about wives and daughters of honest men — let him write about whores! A whore's business is to excite passion.

That of a pure woman is to quench it. What horribly immoral people the Western people are!"

—Don Juan is the imagination of the West. No Japanese Don Juan — no Chinese Don Juan — ever existed or could exist. He is a common type at home. But the Orient rejoices also in exemption from one of the most terrible creations of Western life; — no Oriental is haunted by "the Woman thou shalt never know."

What a curse and a delusion is that beautiful spectre! How many lives she makes desolate! How many crimes does she inspire, "the Woman thou shalt never know!" — the impossible ideal, not of love, but of artistic passion, pursued by warm hearts from youth till age, always in vain. As her pursuer grows more old, she becomes ever more young and fair. He waits for her through the years — waits till his hair is grey. Then — wifeless, childless, blasé, ennuyé, cynical, misanthropic — he looks in the glass and finds that he has been cheated out of youth and life. But does he give up the chase? No! — the hair of Lilith — just one — has been twisted round his heart — an ever-tightening fine spider-line of gold. And he sees her smile just ere he passes into the Eternal darkness.

Then again, our social morals! We never in the West talk to people of their duties. Do orators make speeches about duties? Do any, except priests, talk about social duties? But what do we talk to the people about? We talk to them about their

rights — "by G——d!" Always, incessantly, ad nauseam, about their *rights*. Now to talk to people who know nothing of social science, of political economy, of ethical ideas in their relation to eternal truths — to talk to such people about their *rights*, is like giving a new-born baby a razor to play with. Or putting a loaded revolver in the hands of a mischievous child. Or inviting a crowd of urchins to make a bonfire in the immediate vicinity of ten thousand barrels of gunpowder. And the Oriental knows this. (Wherefore in China it was a law that he who should say or invent anything new should be put to death — an extreme view of the necessities of the case, but not much more extreme than our own philistinism.)

The Japanese of the new school do not, however, keep to the Chinese wisdom. They show evidence now of a desire to put to death those who say anything older than yesterday. They are becoming infected with the Western moral poison. They are beginning to love their wives more than their fathers and mothers; — it is much cheaper. . . .

By the way, I am in a world of new sensations. My first child will be born, I expect, about September next. The rest of my family have come from Matsue — father-in-law, father's father also, a nice old man of eighty-four. We are now all together. There is universal joy because of the birth in prospect. And I am accused of not seeming joyful enough. I am not sorry. But I hope my little one

will never have to face life in the West, but may always dwell in a Buddhist atmosphere.

Ever most faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *April*, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK, — Your most welcome lines of March 1 came to me during a lonesome spring vacation — to brighten it up. Your wish about a Japanese love-story has been partly answered in the March "Atlantic"; and in the June number, you will have a paper of mine, entitled the "Japanese Smile," which you will find as philosophical as you could wish. — No, I have been working well, but for a book only; and of that book only five or six chapters can be published in a magazine. I am not yet sure if the book will be published in the shape I want — although the publishers show some signs of yielding.

So much for me. I was too egotistic last time, and will not be so much so again, unless I get a very awful attack of the blues within the next five years. . . .

To return to Japan and Japanese life. What do you think of the following? It happened near Kumamoto. A peasant went to consult an astrologer what to do for his mother's eyes: she had become blind. The astrologer said that she would get her sight back if she could eat a little human liver — taken fresh and from a young body. The peasant

went home crying, and told his wife. She said: "We have only one boy. He is beautiful. You can get another wife as good, or better than I, very easily, but might never be able to get another son. Therefore, you must kill me instead of the son, and give my liver to your mother." They embraced; and the husband killed her with a sword, and cut out the liver and began to cook it, when the child awoke and screamed. Neighbours and police came. In the police court, the peasant told his tale with childish frankness and cited stories from the Buddhist scriptures. The judges were moved to tears. They did not condemn the man to death; — they gave only nine years in prison. Really the man who ought to have been killed was the astrologer. And this but a few miles off from where they are teaching integral calculus, trigonometry, and Herbert Spencer! yet Western science and religion could never inspire that idolatrous self-devotion to a mother which the old ignorant peasant and his wife had. She thought it her sacred duty to die for her mother-in-law. . . .

I am going to have the delight of a visit from the author of "The Soul of the Far East." He is a lucky man — wonderful genius, strength, youth, and plenty of money. He spends six months of each year in the Orient. Professor Chamberlain, my other friend, spent a few days with me last week. He speaks Japanese better than the Japanese; — in fact, he is *Professor of Japanese in the Imperial University of Japan.* He mentions me in his books; and

Conder, who writes those beautiful books about Japanese flower arrangement and Japanese gardens, has just written a book with a kindly reference to me.

Enough to tire you, I fear, already. Well, *au revoir*, till the next mail.

Affectionately ever

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, *April*, 1893

MY DEAR NISHIDA, — About the sentence that puzzles you (as it well might puzzle anybody unaccustomed to what we call "rant") — the phrase simply signifies the Bible. It is based on the idea that Christ is the "*Light* of the World" (Light and Glory being used synonymously); and the origin of this expression again goes back beyond Christianity into ancient Gnostic ideas — *probably* based on the Iranian belief of Ormuzd, the (Persian or Iranian) God of *Light*, as distinguished from Ahriman, the Spirit of Evil and Darkness. The common Christian people know nothing of this; but from childhood, they are accustomed to hear the word "Bible" coupled with the words "light" and "glory" and "illumination" — and to see pictures representing a Bible surrounded with rays of light beaming from it as from a sun. "The glory of the mechanic's shop," i.e., illuminating the darkness of labour, the suffering and gloom, by light of consolation, etc.

— But I must say that all this is what we call "rant" (worse than "cant"); — it is of no earthly use to let the boys read it. I used always to skip it. The article is not even good English: it is fanatical "gush" and humbug. If I were you, I would not bother with it at all — except for your own amusement, as a study of queer ideas. I don't mean to say *all* writing of this sort is bad; — some of it is very beautiful, although the ideas be false. But that stuff in Sanders's Reader is the sort we call "*cheap* rant" — such as any uneducated Sunday-school teacher can spout by the mile. . . .

I do not think Setsu can travel again this year. I expect to become a father about September, or perhaps even sooner. So we shall not see Tōkyō in 1893, at all events. And the chances are that I shall not be able to travel very far; — as I shall have to be in constant weekly communication with the mail-steamers for America. The preparation of the printed proofs will be hard work.

I am sorry about Goto. You summed him up, however, very keenly a long time ago. — We have a wonderful drawing-master here, who painted a wonderful oil-portrait of Mr. Akizuki. And that man is only getting twelve dollars a month (counting the deduction of his salary for building warships)! Yet he is really a fine artist.

Besides the letter of introduction I gave you to Mr. Kano, I also wrote him a long letter about you last year. Should you go to Tōkyō, therefore, re-

mind him of that. Or, if you wish, I will write you at once a third letter to take with you. You will like Mr. Kano at sight. He charms even the most reserved foreigners, and still he is perfectly easy and simple in his manners. Faithfully yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *April*, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . I hear rarely from America, and have no definite news from Boston up to date. They send me a paper — the Sunday edition, full of poetry about love, woodcuts of beauties of fashion, and all sorts of chatter about women and new styles of undergarments. To-day, after three years in the most Eastern East, when I look at that paper, I can hardly believe my eyes. The East has opened my eyes. How affected the whole thing seems! Yet it never seemed so to me before. My students say to me, "Dear Teacher, why are your English novels all filled with nonsense about love and women? — we do not like such things." Then I tell them partly why. "You must know, my dear young gentlemen, that in England and America, marriage is a most important matter — though it is something you never even speak about in Japan. For in Japan, it is as easy to get married as it is to eat a bowl of rice. But for educated young men in the West, it is very difficult and dangerous to marry. It is necessary to be rich to marry well — or to be,

at least, what *you* would call rich. And the struggle for life is very bitter and very terrible — so bitter and terrible that you cannot possibly imagine what it means. It is hard to live at all — made harder to marry. Therefore the whole object of life is to succeed *in order to get married.* And the parents have nothing to do with the matter, as in Japan; the young man must please the girl, and must win her away from all other young men who want to get her. That is why the English and others write all that stuff about love and beauty and marriage, and why everybody buys those books and laughs or weeps over them — though to you they are simply disgusting."

But that was not all the truth. The whole truth is always suggested to me by the Sunday paper. We live in the musky atmosphere of desire in the West; — an erotic perfume emanates from all that artificial life of ours; — we keep the senses perpetually stimulated with a million ideas of the eternal feminine; and our very language reflects the strain. The Western civilization is using all its arts, its sciences, its philosophy in stimulating and exaggerating and exacerbating the thought of sex. An Oriental would almost faint with astonishment and shame to see a Western ballet. He would scream at the sight of a French nude. He would be scandalized by a Greek statue. He would rightly and instantly estimate all this as being exactly what it is — artificial stimulus of dangerous senses. The whole West is steeped in it. It now seems, even to me, almost disgusting.

Yet what does it mean? Certainly it pollutes literature, creates and fosters a hundred vices, accentuates the misery of those devoted by the law of life as the victims of lust. It turns art from Nature to sex. It cultivates one æsthetic faculty at the expense of all the rest. And yet — perhaps its working is divine behind all that veil of vulgarity and lustfulness. It is cultivating also, beyond any question, a capacity for tenderness the Orient knows nothing of. Tenderness is not of the Orient *man*. He is without brutality, but he is also without that immense reserve force of deep love and forgiving-power which even the rougher men of the West have. The Oriental is intellectually, rationally capable of all self-sacrifice and loyalty: he does the noblest and grandest things without even the ghost of a tender feeling. His feeblest passion is that of sex, because with him the natural need has never been starved or exasperated. He marries at sixteen or seventeen perhaps — is a father of two or three children at twenty. All that sort of thing for him belongs to the natural appetites: he would no more talk about his wife or tell you he had a child born, than he would tell you that his organs performed their function regularly at 6.30 A.M. He is ashamed of appearing to have any sexual love at all in public; — and his family live all their lives in the shadow — do not appear to visitors. Well, his nature may lose something by this. It loses certainly in capacities that mean everything for us — tenderness, deep sym-

pathy, a world of sensations not indeed sexual with us, yet surely developed out of sexualism to no small extent — just as the sense of moral beauty developed out of the sense of physical beauty.

I guess this must bore you, however. More anon of other matters.

Ever faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *June*, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK, — I am not quite sure that you are right about the Oriental view of things. It is very difficult to understand at first. It is not want of refinement or sensibility to beautiful things. It is rather a tendency to silence and secrecy in regard to the highest emotions. So that a cultivated Japanese never even speaks of his wife and family, or hints of his fondness for them. Of course, our idea is nobler and higher. But it is a question with me whether it cannot be, and has not been, developed to excess. I think we have filled the whole universe with an ideal of woman. Star-swarms and all cosmical glories exist for us only in an infinity of passional pantheism. I suspect that we see Nature especially through the beauty of woman. A splendid tree, a fragrant bud, delicacy of petals, songs of birds, undulations of hills, mobility of waters, sounds of foliage, murmur of breezes and their caress, laughter of streamlets, even the gold light — do not all these things remind

us of woman? You might cite the ruggedness of oaks and the grimness of crags as masculine. True, we have visions of Nature as masculine — for rugged and mighty contrasts. But how enormously preponderant is the eternal feminine! Even our language is a language of gender — in which I think the feminine predominates. But in our thought the masculine at once suggests the feminine, and creates a new idea. All precious things, too, remind us of what is not masculine, because "far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of *her*."

Now the Oriental sees Nature in no such way. His language has no gender. He does not think of a young girl when he sees a palm, nor of the lines of a beautiful body when he sees the undulations of the hills. Neither does he see Nature as masculine. He sees it as *neuter*. His geographical nomenclature shows this. He sees things as they are. The immediate inference would be that he finds less enjoyment in them. But his art shows that he finds *more*. He sees in Nature much that we can't see at all. He sees beauty in stones — in common stones — in clouds, fogs, smoke, curling water, shapes of trees, shapes of insects. In my friend's alcove is a stone. When you can learn that that stone is more beautiful than a beautiful painting, you can begin to understand that there is another way of seeing Nature. In my own garden there are a number of large stones. Their value is seven hundred dollars. No American would give five cents for them — no! he

would not dream of taking them as a gift — no! he would consider himself highly insulted by the offer! Then why are they worth seven hundred dollars? Because they are beautiful. You would say: "I can't see it!" You can't see it because you see all Nature through the idea of woman. And it is just faintly possible (I don't say certain) that our way — your way of seeing Nature is all wrong. It is like peeping through an atmosphere which makes everything iridescent and deflects the lines of forms.

Now, why do I suspect that our way of looking at Nature may not be the highest — besides the plain fact that it is not according to the Eternal order of things? I suspect it because the evolution of the ideal has been chiefly physical. It has not been an ideal of soul. Is the soul of a woman more beautiful than that of a man — outside of maternal tenderness? You have just had a divine glimpse of two souls — excuse the personal question (for it is a highly important one): which seemed to you the largest and deepest? — in which were the glories more profound and radiant? And is it not essential that the woman-beauty of soul must be the lesser; for its scope must be limited by its eternal duty. We are in the presence, however, of the undeniable fact that we rarely get glimpses of the higher possibilities of the man-soul. Life is too hard and bitter. But in the twilight of every home one sees the woman-souls glowing like fireflies. We think only of the lights

we see. The circling darknesses are opaque to us — like burnt-out suns.

Reading over the list of things in your notebook I was impressed by several facts. It is well to set down everything that impresses you. But — I cannot help thinking that you do not look for the highest — that you miss a universe of beautiful things. The obtrusive, the eccentric, the sharply bitter, the "Distorted Souls" as you call them, naturally compel attention first — just as in real life the forward, the selfish, the aggressive, force themselves upon us. It is of the highest possible value, as a means of self-preservation, to understand them. But I suspect that it is of no value at all to draw them, to photograph them, to give them artistic treatment *except in a contrast-study*. They are not beautiful. They are not good. They are, using the word in the Miltonic sense, obscene — like owls. On the other hand the beautiful in life must be sought, and coaxed, and caressed to make it show its colours. It does not appear very often spontaneously. Yet I feel convinced it is all about us. It travels on railroads too, and lodges at hotels. It fights for life against ugliness and wickedness and apathy and selfishness: it is Ormuzd against Ahriman. Now what is the artist's moral duty? (Of course he may take any subject he pleases and be great in it.) But what is his duty in the eternal order of things, to art and to ethics? Is it not to extract the gold from the ore — the rubies and emeralds from the rubble? I think it is — though

many may laugh at me. Thus newer and higher ideals are created. We advance only by new ideals. I don't mean to say we should make statues of pure gold, or a table, like that of some Caliph, out of a single emerald. But I think that in modern life we should use the dross and slag only when their lightness, worthlessness, or rudeness brings out in higher relief the light of the pure jewel, the weight of the pure metal, the value of that which gives the radiance or the gravity. And in the order of research I would seek the lodes and veins first; — the rest is always easy to find and handle, though requiring much scientific skill, of course, to use artistically.

There *is* a world, I suppose, almost as barren as the Alkali Plains, where convention has strangled all feeling, and where the development of selfish capacities has choked the other growths. But either below this world or above it there are Americas to discover — full of warmth, light, and beauty — continents chained to each other by snow-peaks, watered by Amazons and Mississippis.

Below, I think, more than above — for the nearer to Nature, the nearer to truth. And the value, artistically, of our high-pressure civilization seems to me to be that its monstrosities and glooms and tragedies infernal give an opportunity for the grandest contrasts ever made. What I would pray you to do is "to put a lily in the mouth of Hell" — using one of Carlyle's phrases. Then the petals of

the lily will change into pure light, like those of the Lotus of Amida Buddha. . . .

Good-bye, with affectionate wishes

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *July*, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK,—To continue from my last:

It seems to me you might have mistaken my meaning in my half-criticism of the contents of your notebook. I don't wish you should think I find any fault with them per se. Indeed you cannot set down too much. Only I think you have been collecting only shadow-and-fire material. You have no sky-blues — no rose and violet and purple and gold-yellow — no cadmium, no iridescences. You have that which will give them all value — artistic value. Even if you have only one light for ten darknesses, it will be enough to illume them all.

And now for Ego and Egotisms. In my home the women are all making baby-clothes — funny little Japanese baby-clothes. All the tender Buddhist divinities, who love little children, have been invoked except one — he who cares for them only when they are dead, and plays little ghostly games with them in the shadowy world. Letters of congratulation come from all directions, and queer, pretty presents; for the announcement of pregnancy is a subject of great gladness in Japan. And one theme

of rejoicing is that the child will look more like a Japanese than the children of other foreigners, because the father is dark. Behind all this, of course, there is a universe of new sensations — new ideas — revelations of things in Buddhist faith and in the religion of the more ancient gods, which are very beautiful and touching. About the world an atmosphere of delicious, sacred naïveté — difficult to describe, because resembling nothing in the Western world. — Some doubts and fears for me, of course; but they are passing away gradually. I have only some anxiety about *her:* still she is so strong that I trust the gods will be kind to us. . . .

This summer I shall not be able to travel far. First, of course, I can't leave my little woman too long alone; second, I have proofs to correct; third, I am economizing. We have now nearly $3500 between us; and I want to try to provide for her as soon as I can — so that once the chances of ill luck are off my mind, I can make a few long voyages to other places east of Japan. The Chinese ports are only a few days distant; and there is Manila, there is the French Orient to see. I hope to be able to do this in a few years more. You will be glad to hear I am very strong, though getting grey — much stronger than I was at thirty.

Professor Chamberlain and I have a secret project in hand — a book on Japanese folk-lore. Whether we can carry it out I do not know; but if the dear

Professor's health keeps up we shall do something together. . . .

Ever faithfully
LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, *August*, 1893

DEAR NISHIDA, — I got your kind letter — and the money — and the ballads; for all of which a thousand thanks. I feel you have been very, very kind in all this, even while you were sick: so that my poor thanks signify little of what I really feel towards you. It has given me much pleasure to hear of your being better; but I am disappointed at your being unable to travel — very much disappointed, as I fear I will not be able to leave Kumamoto again this vacation. . . .

I see that, as regards Kyūshū compared with Tōkyō, you take the moral aspect of the question, while I have possibly been ruled too much by the artistic side. I cannot fully understand the moral side, of course: I can only perceive that the Kyūshū students are allowed to dress as simply as possible — are encouraged to be frugal and frank, and rough in their sports — and are generally said to be extremely independent and what you call katai, is n't it? But whether they are really any better than Matsue students, I don't know. Certainly they have no pleasures to soften their minds. There is nothing to see, and nowhere to go. And Kyōto is the

most delightful city in the whole of Japan. However, I suppose it has also temptations for students of a dangerous sort. . . .

I had no luck with Kumagae Masayoshi, and was obliged to send the boy back to Oki, after he had worried and made unhappy everybody in the house. He was an extraordinarily clever boy — both at school, and at everything he undertook — extremely skilful with his hands, and almost diabolically intelligent. But he had no affection at all, and seemed to be naturally very cruel and cunning. He was strictly honest, and trustworthy — for all that. But his character was supremely selfish and malignant. He made nasty songs about people, and sang them, and gave us the impression of being a small devil.

I am trying to do some literary work. Your ballad of Shuntoku-maru proved quite useful to me in the course of an essay I wrote on the difficulty experienced by Japanese in understanding a certain class of English poetry and fiction. It revealed a popular conception of things — that ballad, which I took for an illustration, in showing the total unlikeness of Western to Oriental society — especially in the family relation; the absence of flirting and kissing and woman-worship which we have in the West. Indeed I think the great difficulty of mutual comprehension between the Japanese and the English is chiefly due to the predominance of a *feminine idea* in our language, our art, and our whole conception

of Nature. Therefore the Oriental can see aspects of Nature to which we remain blind. . . .

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO OCHIAI

KUMAMOTO, *August*, 1893

MY DEAR OCHIAI, — It has given me much pleasure to hear of your success at the examinations. I wish you all good fortune for the coming year, and good health to aid you.

I want also to talk to you about another matter very much to your interest. Please pay attention to my words, and think about them. I only wish your happiness; — therefore remember that what I say deserves your attention and your thought.

I want to talk to you about Christianity, as a religion — not as a shū, or sect. I hope you will understand the distinction I make. A religion is a moral belief which causes men to live honestly and to be kind and good to each other. A sect is made by a *difference* of belief as to what is true religious teaching. Thus in Buddhism there are many sects or shū; and in Christianity, there are also many sects or shū. But it is not what makes the sects that has made Buddhism. Neither is it what has made the Christian sects that has made Christianity. Truth makes a religion — moral truth; sects are made by differences of opinion about the meaning of kyō, or the meaning of other sacred texts.

So much for this. I want now to tell you, as your

friend, that it is *not* Christianity to refuse to bow before the portrait of the Emperor, or before the tombs of the great dead. If anybody tells you that is Christianity — that person is not a Christian, but a bigot, and an enemy of his country. Whenever we sing the English national anthem, we take off our hats. Whenever we enter into the presence of one of Her Majesty's representatives, we take off our hats. We stand up to drink Her Majesty's health. We are taught that the Queen rules by divine command. It is the same in Germany, in Austria, in Italy, in Spain — in all except republican countries. So much for that. It is quite right, even for a Christian, to bow before the Emperor's picture; — it is loyal, noble, and good to do it. To refuse to do it is ignorant and vulgar. It is not Christian at all.

Now about the question of tombs and temples. What is the Christian custom? The Christian custom is to pay proper and just respect to the religion which other people believe in. If I go into a Christian church — although I am not a Christian — I must take off my hat. If I go into a Mohammedan mosque, I must take off my shoes. Such tokens of respect are purely social — they are just and right. In Mexico, for example, when a religious procession passes, everybody who is polite takes off his hat. That means — "Although I am not of your religion, I respect your religion — your prayers to heaven, and your wish to be good."

Again, when a funeral goes by, we take off our

hats. That means, "Although none of *my* friends have died, I sympathize with your sorrow." It is courteous and it is right.

Whatever you believe, my dear Ochiai, you need never refuse to show respect to the tomb of an Emperor, to the memory of an ancestor, or the religion of another people or another country. Christianity teaches no such discourtesy. Only bigots teach it — and even they teach it for reasons you are not able to understand. I do not want to question your religious belief at all; — that is not my duty. I want only to talk to you about social action in reference to *real* religion. No honest religion ought to cause you any unhappiness, or to cause you to be blamed by others. Religion ought to be of the heart. It is not a question of hats and shoes. Do not refuse to show respect to honest customs and honest reverence for ancestors, by a bow, or a removal of the hat. It will injure your prospects in life to make ill will for yourself by refusing to show respect to the beliefs of your nation and country. Such respect has nothing to do with your faith; — it is a question of social politeness and gentlemanliness. And when you refuse, you will not be judged for your belief — not at all. You will simply be thought vulgar — not a true gentleman.

A true gentleman respects *all* religions. That is the real Western idea. Do not deceive yourself.

This from your true friend and teacher

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *August*, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . And now for a letter. Your last two letters were full of curious things that call for no answer, but, in connection with foregoing ones, certainly invite comment. More and more, reading your lightning-flash glimpses of life, I think how terribly tragical modern life is becoming. What is its law? Is it not something like this?

General: (1) Theoretically, you must be good. (2) Practically you must be not very good — unless you wish to starve or live in the slime. (3) Reconcile these facts very intelligently, without making any blunders.

Special: (1) If you are not more intelligent than the average man, you must be both theoretically and practically good — and resign yourself to remaining poor and despised all your blessed life. Don't kick: if you do, you'll die! (2) In proportion as you are more intelligent than your fellow man, the more to your interest to depart from abstract moral rules; — the more, indeed, you *must*. It is quite true that vice and crime lead to ruin. Still, you must perform your part of both without getting into trouble. If you don't, you will die. (3) Reconcile intelligently these seeming contradictions.

The contradictions can only be fully recognized and reconciled through a profound knowledge of social conditions, not in the abstract only, but in the most complex operation. This is the theoretical

recognition. But the practical recognition requires special hereditary gifts — intuitions — instincts — powers. Mere education in business alone won't do. That only makes servants. Masters must be *natural* masters of men. Life is an intellectual battle, but not a battle to be fought out by mere chess-combinations. It is also a battle of characters. The combinations required for success are of the most difficult — comprising force, perception, versatility, resource — and enough comprehension of morals as factors in sociology to avoid fatal mistakes. He who has all this, and strong health, goes to the top. But he has there to fight for his standing-room. Besides all other fighting, he has to fight against himself.

In the Buddhist system, the soul, by self-suppression and struggle against temptation, obtains Light and effects progress. The Past begins to be remembered, the Future to be foreseen. But always in proportion to the progress and the enlightenment, the temptations increase. For example, one reward of virtue is beauty and high sexual power (!) The more indulgence is despised, the greater these gifts. The Soul reaches heaven. Then is the greatest of all temptations. Life for thousands of ages — supreme beauty and power — supreme loveliness of celestial beings offered to feast upon. And here can be no *sin:* it is only a question of further progress. Indulgence means retrogression. The wise only pass to Nirvana. — Now I fancy the battle of life has the same moral.

It is a terrible battle now, though; and is becoming fiercer every year — and aggravating with a velocity beyond all precedent. (I see there is a falling-off in the birth-rate of the United States — which means increased difficulty of living.) And ultimately what must come out of all this? Pain is certainly the only reliable creator — the only one whose work endures. Extraordinary intelligence and mental dynamical power will be results, of course — up to a certain time. I do not see much likelihood, however, of *moral* development. Indeed, as Mackintosh long ago said, morals have been at a standstill since the beginning of history: we have made no apparent progress in that. Then comes the question, Are we not developing immorally?

I have begun to think immorality must be, in the eternal order of things, a *moral* force. That is, some kinds of it — the aggressive kinds: those which the whole world agrees to call immoral. For the physical value and excellence of a life in its relation to other lives is primarily in its capacity to meet all hostile influences by changes correspondingly effected within itself. This is called adaptation to environment. If this be the physical side of the question, what is the moral side? That the perfect character must be able to oppose or to meet all hostile influences by corresponding changes within itself. This necessarily involves a prodigious experience of evil — a deep, personal, intimate, artistic, loving knowledge of evil. I see a frightful dualism only in pros-

pect. No love or mercy outside of the circle of each active life. As Spencer holds, absolute morality can only begin where the struggle for existence has ceased. This is not new. The appalling prospect is this — How infinitely worse the world must become before it begins to improve at all! — And surely education ought to be conducted with a knowledge of these things.

But will the existing state of things continue indefinitely? Surely, it can't! It is too monstrous, and the suffering too infernal! There must be social smashings, earthquakes, chaos-breakings-up, recrystallizations to lighten the burthen. And what will these be?

I cannot send you, because there is no copy here, but I recommend you a book — Pearson's "National Character," a study. He takes the ground that the future is not to the white races — not to the Anglo-Saxon. I think this almost certain. I think of the awful cost of life to the white races — the more awful cost of character. I think of the vast races of creatures — behemoths and megatheriums and ichthyosaurians — which have disappeared from the earth simply because of the cost of their physical structure. But what is the physical cost of even the structure of an ichthyosaurus to the cost of the structure of a master of applied mathematics! It costs one educated European — receiving, say, a salary of one hundred dollars a month — exactly as much as it costs twenty educated Orientals to live

— each with a family of at least three persons — or in other words 1 European = 120 Orientals. There is an instinctive knowledge, perhaps, of the future, in the instinctive hatred of the Chinese in America. There is an instinctive sense of the same kind in the feeling which prompts the Oriental to exclude Europeans. The latter *over*live the former; the former underlive the latter.

But in all this there are complicated physiological questions extraordinary.

Ever affectionately

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . "Thou shalt not love" is of Buddha. "He who hath wife and child hath taken upon him fear. Such a fear is greater than that which the man should feel who, unarmed and alone, entering a cavern, meets a tiger face to face." It is true, the greatest of all fear is the fear for another — the frightful imaginings of sorrow or want or despair for another. But there might be perfect conditions. That is true; — but then — beware the jealousy of the gods. A Rossetti finds his Ideal Maiden, weds, loses, maddens, and passes the rest of his nights in tears of regret, and his days in writing epitaphs. Children may console and they may shame — and they may die just when they have become charming — and they may ruin us; and at

best, in the world of the West, they separate from us, and we can keep only memories of them. Some woman or some man gets hold of their heart and bites it, and the poison spreads a veil between parents and offspring for all time. Finally, in any conditions, the burthen of life is enormously increased. How much more must a man bear, and how much less can he assert himself, when he has ever to remember that he has ceased to belong to himself. Such is a Buddhist view of the thing. It is not all wrong. . . .

L. H.

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

August, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK, — What you wrote about the charming person "*flirting* with her maternal instincts" is delicious. I recognized the portrait in a most fantastic past experience — but of that anon. The thought sent me off into a reverie about — adulteration.

There is a philosophy about adulteration I don't know much about. I have not sufficiently learned the main facts about the practical and utilitarian side of adulteration — though I read the "petit dictionnaire des falsifications," and other things. However, let's try. Most of what we sell now is adulteration. We used to feel angry, when I was a boy, at the mere thought that leather-composition should be sold for genuine leather — shoddy for wool —

cotton mixed with silk for pure silk, etc. We wanted our spoons to be genuine silver, and our claret quite trustworthy. Since then we have had to resign ourselves to margarine, glucose, and other products which have become vast staples of commerce. In some cases the genuine has been altogether supplanted by the false; and the false has been universally accepted with full knowledge of its origin. There have been advantages enormous to industry and manufacture, of course; and the public health has not been ruined, according to prediction. On the contrary it has been improving, and the nervous system developing.

Now may not the same thing be going on in our morals? Or rather, must it not go on? We are substituting the sham for the real. It is very sorrowful and excites awful surmises; but nevertheless the sham seems to do very well. The trouble with the original article was its cost and its enormous solidity. It was not malleable. It resisted pressure. It was not adapted at all to the new life of cities and science. For example, absolute veracity interfered with business — absolute love became a nuisance, took up too much space, and proved too incompressible. Just as we have become too sensitive to bear the rawness of pure colour, so have we become too sensitive to bear the rawness of pure affection. We consider persons vulgar who wear blood-red, grass-green, burning yellows and blues — persons of undeveloped feeling and taste. So also we begin to

think people vulgar who are prone to live by any simple emotions. We hold them undeveloped. We don't want the real thing. No: we want shades, tones — imperceptible tones, ethereal shades. Even in books the raw emotion has become distasteful, savage. Pure passion is penny-theatrical. Is n't all this a suggestion of fact? And is n't the fact founded upon necessary physiological changes? Existing life is too complex for pure emotions. We want mixed tonics — delicately flavoured and tinted.

All of which means that the primal sources of life are becoming forgotten. Love, honour, idealism, etc., these can no longer be supreme or absorbing motives. They interfere with more serious necessities, and with pleasure. We have first to learn how to live inside the eight-day clock of modern life without getting caught in the cogs. This learned — and it is no easy lesson — we may venture to indulge in some falsifications of emotion, some shot-silk colours of love. Such seems to me the drift. The most serious necessity of life is not to take the moral side of it seriously. We must play with it, as with an hetaira.

The genuine is only good for the agricultural districts.

And is this progress in a durable sense, or morbidness in evolution? Really I am not sure.

Ever affectionately

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

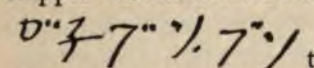
KUMAMOTO, *August*, 1893

DEAR NISHIDA, — I have missed you very much this long vacation; but, as I anticipated, it could not be helped. Another bundle of proofs has been keeping me at work; and I find the book promises to be bigger than I told you in my last letter. They are using type that will spread it out to probably seven hundred and fifty pages. I send you one specimen proof — just to show you the size of the type.

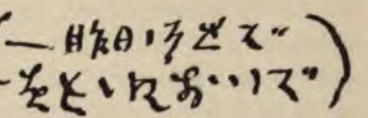
The man who has been sent for to fill the place in Kyōto, will not, I imagine, be able to keep it. He is a rabid proselytizer; in Kumamoto, years ago, he formed a society of Christians, called the Christian Band (I forget the Japanese name): that is why the Kyūshū folk nearly killed him. Privately — between you and me — I think there will be great changes in the Kyōto middle school next year; *and I think that I shall get there.* But there is nothing sure. I will not go to Tōkyō as long as I can help it.

Many thanks for your splendid letter about the legends of the ballads. I have put it away carefully to use in a future essay. — You say, if you were to tell me about the noble things the common people do, you would never get done. Indeed, *one* strong fact would give me work for two or three months. The publishers wrote me to say they want stories of the life of the common people *to-day* — showing the influence of moral teaching on *conduct:* that is,

Buddhist, Shintō, and ancestor-teaching. I have been trying to get the facts about the poor girl who killed herself in Kyōto because the Emperor "augustly mourned" after the crazy action of Tsuda Sanzo; but I have not yet succeeded. By the way, I think Tsuda Sanzo will be more kindly judged by a future generation. His crime was only "loyalty-run-mad." He was insane for the moment with an insanity which would have been of the highest value in a good cause and time. He saw before him the living representative of the awful Power which makes even England tremble; — the power against which Western Europe has mustered an army of more than fifteen million of men. He saw, or thought he saw (perhaps he really *did* see: time only can show) the Enemy of Japan. Then he struck — out of his heart, without consulting his head. He did very wrong; — he made a sad mistake; but I think that man's heart was noble and true, in spite of all his foolishness. He would have been a hero under happier circumstances. . . .



I have just heard that the name of one kind of those horrid beetles in Kumamoto is *gane-bun-bun*, and the hyakushō call them gane-bu; and people throw them out of the window, saying, "Come back the day-before-yesterday." Then they never come back at all.



I have made a mistake again. The gane-bun-bun is not the greatest plague I was complaining of — but the fu-mushi. There is yet another small one, I have not found out the name of. They make a whole room smell horribly. Some, however, call both the big fu-mushi and the small creature by the same name — distinguishing them only as the green and the black. By the way, I will put a fu-mushi in this letter, because they keep coming on the table so that I think it may be well to send one to Izumo, in the hopes of inducing the rest to emigrate.

All send kindest regards to you, and pray you to take good care of your health.

With every best wish, believe me ever

Most faithfully

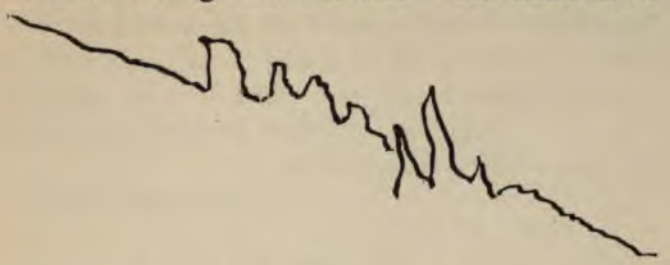
LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

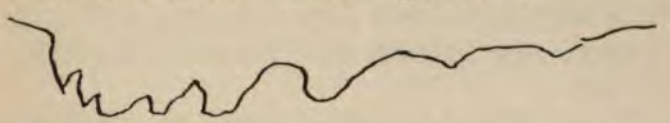
KUMAMOTO, 1893

DEAR NISHIDA, — It gave me much pleasure to get your last kind letter. There was much depth in your statement of the present instability being consequent upon the stagnation of three hundred years. As to the consequence, however, only two theories are possible. The instability means — however it end — disintegration. Is the disintegration to be permanent? — or is there to be a re-integration? That is what nobody can say. There is this, however. Usually a movement of disintegration repre-

sents something like this line — the undulations



signifying waves of reaction. This movement is downward, and ends in ruin. However, so far, the undulations in Japan have been, I think, of a very different character — something like this:



which would mean restoration of national solidity upon a much higher plane than before. The doubt is whether a much larger movement of disintegration is not going on — whose undulations are too large to be seen in a space of thirty years.

You have noticed that under all the surface waves of a sea, far vaster waves move — too large to be seen. They are only *felt* — upon *long* voyages.

Mr. Senke has sent me a letter which I think is the most wonderfully kind and gracious letter anybody ever received in this whole world, and how to answer it at all, I don't know. He has also promised to send some souvenir; I am not quite sure what it is: I must

try to write him a nice letter when it comes. But Mr. Senke writes as an Emperor would write — with a grace for which there is no equivalent in Western speech at all; and whatever I try to do, it must seem vulgar and common beside the splendid courtesy of Mr. Senke's style.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO OCHIAI

KUMAMOTO, *November*, 1893

DEAR OCHIAI, — I was very glad indeed to get your letter. It came while the school was closed — all the students having gone upon an excursion to Ōita, so that I did not receive it until to-day (the 11th), when I went to the school to see if there were any letters for me.

Don't think any more about any mistakes you may have made; — everybody will forget them quickly: only think about what makes you happy. But as for Christianity, of course that is a matter for your own conscience; and I would not advise you at all unless you are in doubt. I can only tell you this — that there are a great many different forms of what is called the Christian religion — a very great many. But what is called the "higher Christianity" is a pure code of ethics; and that code of ethics recognizes that in all civilized religions — whether of Japan, India, China, Persia, or Arabia — there is *some* eternal truth; because all religions agree in the deepest teaching about duty and conduct to one's

fellow men; and therefore all are entitled to the respect of good men. But in all religions also there are some things which even very good men cannot approve: that is not the fault of the true part of religion, but only the fault of social conditions — that is, the state of society. No state of society is yet perfect; and there can be no perfect religious system until all men become perfectly good. How to become good is, nevertheless, taught by all civilized religions. Nearly everything which is eternally true is taught by one as well as by the other; and therefore a society cannot throw away its religion on account of some errors in it. And each religion represents the experience of a nation with right and wrong — its knowledge of morality. But as society is constructed quite differently in different countries, the religion of one country may not be suited to another. That is why the introduction of a foreign religion may often be opposed by a whole people. For some things which are right in one country may not be right in another. It is not right in China or in Japan to leave one's parents, and to neglect them when they are old. But in England and America and other countries, sons and daughters go away from their parents, and do not think it a duty to support them; — and there is no family relation in those countries such as there is in the Orient. And therefore many things in Western religion are not suited to the kinder and more benevolent life of Japan. Also, some religions teach loyalty, and some do not. For Japan

to become strong, and to remain independent, it is very necessary that her people should remain very loyal. Her ancient religion teaches loyalty; — therefore it is still very useful to her. And that is why there is anger shown against some Christians who show no respect to that religion. They are not blamed for not believing in dogmas, but only for what seems to be not loyal.

Perhaps it is better that you should not think a great deal about religious questions until you become old enough to study scientific philosophy — because these questions ought to be studied in relation to society, in relation to history, in relation to law, in relation to national character, and in relation to science. Therefore they are very difficult. But if you should like to read the highest thoughts of Western people about *modern* religious ideas, I can send you some little books which will show you that the highest religion agrees with the highest science. What I mean by the highest religion is the belief in eternal laws of right conduct. However, as I said, to think about these questions at all requires great study and much knowledge. I think the best advice I can give you in a general way is this — Do not believe a new thing told you because it is told you; but think for yourself, and follow your own heart when you are in doubt. But remember that the *old* things taught you have been valuable to society — and have been useful for thousands of years — so that we cannot despise them.

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

I send you a book of old Greek stories to read. Perhaps it will interest you. You will see from the stories how different the old Greek life was from modern life in many things. You must tell me, too, what books you like to read — novels, history, etc.; perhaps I shall be able to send you some from time to time.

Study well, and never be discouraged; — think only how to make yourself a noble and perfect man. And remember the best men in public life have generally been those who made plenty of mistakes and got into plenty of trouble when they were boys.

And never, *never* be afraid — except of your own heart.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *November*, 1893

DEAR HENDRICK, — I have been waiting several weeks to tell you of an event which occurred later than I expected. Last night my child was born — a very strong boy, with large black eyes; he looks more like a Japanese, however, than like a foreign boy. He has my nose, but his mother's features in some other respects, curiously blended with mine. There is no fault with him; and the physicians say, from the form of his little bones, that he promises to become very tall. A cross between European and Japanese is nearly always an improvement when both parents are in good condition; and happily the old

military caste to which my wife belongs is a strong one. She is quite well. — Still, I had my anxiety, and the new experience brought to me for a moment, with extraordinary force, the knowledge of how sacred and terrible a thing maternity is, and how even religion cannot hedge it about sufficiently with protection. Then I thought with astonishment of the possibility that men could be cruel to women who bore their children; and the world seemed very dark for a moment. When it was all over, I confess I felt very humble and grateful to the Unknowable Power which had treated us so kindly — and I said a little prayer of thanks, feeling quite sure it was not foolish to do so.

If ever you become a father, I think the strangest and strongest sensation of your life will be hearing for the first time the thin cry of your own child. For a moment you have the strange feeling of being double; but there is something more, quite impossible to analyze — perhaps the echo in a man's heart of all the sensations felt by all the fathers and mothers of his race at a similar instant in the past. It is a very tender, but also a very ghostly feeling.

Now the kind dull veil that Nature keeps during most of a life stretched between it and such extraordinary glimpses of the Unknown, is drawn again. The world is the same nearly as before; and I can plan. The little man will wear sandals and dress like a Japanese, and become a good little Buddhist if he lives long enough. He will not have to go to

church, and listen to stupid sermons, and be perpetually tormented by absurd conventions. He will have what I never had as a child — natural physical freedom.

Your two late letters were full of interest and beauty, and you are getting most surprising glimpses of life. I have long had in my mind the idea of a chapter on "Morbid Individuality" — taking issue with Lowell's position in "The Soul of the Far East." Instances like those you have cited are very telling as proofs. The story of the father also is wonderful — absolutely wonderful — a beautiful surprise of human nature.

What also much impressed me in your letter was the feeling of sadness the spectacle of the great Exposition gave you. But I scarcely think it was due to any reminiscences of boyhood — not simply because of its being certainly a feeling infinitely too complex to have sprung out of a single relative experience in the past (your confession of inability to analyze it, and the statement of others who had the same feeling, would show that) — but also because, if you reflect on other experiences of a totally different kind, you will find they give the same sensation. The first sight of a colossal range of mountains; the awful beauty of a peak like Chimborazo or Fuji; the majesty of an enormous river; the vision of the sea in speaking motion; and, among human spectacles, a military sight, such as the passing-by of a corps of fifty thousand men, will give also a

feeling of sadness. You will feel something like it standing in the choir of the Cathedral of Cologne; and you will feel something like it while watching in the night, from some mighty railroad centre, the rushing of glimmering trains — bearing away human lives to unknown destinies beyond the darkness.

Probably, as Schopenhauer said, the vision of mountains has the effect of producing sadness, because the sense of their antiquity awakens sudden recognition of the shortness of human life. But I do not think it is a mere individual feeling. It is a feeling we share with countless dead who live in us, and who saw the same mountains — perhaps felt the same way. Besides, there should be a religious ancestral feeling there — since mountains have ever been the abode of gods, and the earliest places of worship and of burial. And I think there is. You do not laugh when you look at mountains — nor when you look at the sea.

What effect does the sudden sight of an extraordinarily beautiful person have upon you? I mean the very *first*. Is it not an effect of sadness? Analyze it; and perhaps you will find yourself involuntarily thinking of *death*.

What has the effect of any great beauty — of art, or poetry or utterance — no matter what the subject? Is it cheerful? No, it is very sad. But why? Perhaps partly because of the consciousness of the *exceptional* character of that beauty — therefore the sudden contrast between the tender dream-world

of art and goodness, and the hideous goblin realities of the world we know. At all events the sadness is certainly the ancient sadness — the sadness of life, which must, for reasons we cannot learn, begin and end with an agony.

Now at the Exposition you had all the elements for what Clifford would call a "cosmic emotion" of sadness. Vastness, which forced the knowledge of individual weakness; beauty, compelling the memory of impermanency; force, suggesting weakness also; and prodigious effort — calling for the largest possible exertion of human sympathy, and love, and pity, and sorrow. That you should feel like crying then, does you honour: that is the tribute of all that is noblest in you to the eternal Religion of Human Suffering.

Dear H., I have not slept last night: I am going to rest a little; — good-bye for a short time, with love to you.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, *November*, 1893

DEAR NISHIDA, — A few days ago there came from Kizuki a little box addressed to me — from Mr. Senke; and opening it, I found therein the robe of a Kokuzō — all black silk with the sacred mon of the temple worked into the silk. Accompanying the robe were two poems, very beautifully written upon vari-coloured paper. The robe was very curious in

itself, and of course most precious as a souvenir. I hesitated to write at once; for I could not answer Mr. Senke's magnificent letter in a worthy way at all. It was a very long letter, written on fine paper and in large handsome characters. I have now tried to reply, but my answer reads very shabbily compared with Mr. Senke's gracious style.

I found I had forgotten, in writing you the other day, to speak about Kompira, as you asked me. What a pity I had not known about the real temple of Kompira, which I did not see at all. Yes, I did find the place interesting and very beautiful. But it was interesting because of the quaint shops and streets and customs; and it was beautiful *because the day happened to be very beautiful.* The vast blue light coloured everything — walls, timbers, awnings, draperies, dresses of pilgrims; and the cherry-trees were one blaze of snowy blossoms; and the horizon was clear as crystal. In the distance towered Sanuki-Fuji — a cone of amethyst in the light. I wished I could teach in some school at Kompira uchimachi, and stay there always.

I like little towns. To live at Tadotsu, or at Hishi-ura in Oki, or at Yunotsu in Iwami, or at Daikon-shimain Naka-umi, would fill my soul with joy. I cannot like the new Japan. I dislike the officials, the imitation of foreign ways, the airs, the conceits, the contempt for Tempō, etc. Now to my poor mind, all that was good and noble and true was Old Japan: I wish I could fly out of Meiji forever, back

against the stream of Time, into Tempō, or into the age of the Mikado Yūriaku — fourteen hundred years ago. The life of the old fans, the old byōbu, the tiny villages — that is the *real* Japan I love. Somehow or other, Kumamoto does n't seem to me Japan at all. I hate it.

Ever with best regards

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, *November*, 1893

DEAR NISHIDA, — Both of your letters were as interesting as they were kind. They revealed to me much more than I had been able to learn from the newspapers. I am more than sorry for that terrible destruction and suffering in the Ken; but when I think of Okayama, again, I cannot help thinking that the good fortune, which seems especially to belong to Matsue, has not yet deserted her. And the Governor seems to be a first-class man. I like that story of his action with the rice-dealers. But really, the people are very patient. In some Western countries, notably in parts of America, it would have been more than dangerous for men to have acted so selfishly; and they would be in any case afterwards "boycotted," and obliged perhaps to leave the city. It is a great pity they were not made to suffer for such atrocious meanness. When I think of the chrysanthemums in your garden, and read your extraordinary story about catching fish in it, I can realize

what a tremendous loss there must have been through all the rice-country. Certainly Matsue is fortunate to have escaped as she did.

Almost at the same time there came to me news from the Gulf of Mexico. Perhaps you will remember that I wrote a novel about some islands there. I used to pass my summers in those islands. They were about sixty miles from the city of New Orleans. Well, on October 4th, a storm burst over that coast, killing more than two thousand people. The island of Grand Isle was covered by the sea in the night; and everything — houses, trees, and people — carried away. Hundreds I used to know are dead. It is a year of storms and calamities, surely, in all parts of the world.

I will write a better letter later: I am writing now to answer your questions about those sentences:

(i) "Choppy" — "chopped" or "chapped" by cold: "chapped hands" — hands of which the skin is *cracked* by frost. "His hands are all chapped" — that is, all *roughened* by frost. "Choppy" is not so often used as "chapped"; it is a poetical use of the word.

(ii) "He had torn the cataracts from the hills." You must remember here Winter is personified as a monstrous giant. "Cataracts" is used in the sense of "waterfalls." The waterfalls are frozen into solid masses of ice. Winter, the giant, breaks them off, and hangs them round his waist.

(iii) "And they clanked at his girdle like *manacles*" (from Latin manus, "hand") (you spelled the word wrong: it is "manacles"). "Manacles," iron fetters for the hands; — handcuffs. They are made in pairs, fastened together by a chain, and closed by a key. They *clank* when they strike together — i.e., make a ringing metallic noise — because they are of fine steel usually. The sound made by iron is "clank" — "*to* clank" (verb), "*a* clank" (noun). Why does Shelley use such a simile? Because Winter is like a jailer, like the keeper of a prison. He fastens up, or imprisons, the rivers, lakes, and ponds with ice. So he is described as a keeper of prisoners — with manacles or handcuffs hanging to his waist, ready for use. Ice striking against ice makes a ringing noise, very much like iron — sometimes. The comparison is very strong.

And why does he put his chapped finger to his lip? To put the first finger on the lips is a sign for "Be silent!" "Do not speak!" In winter the world becomes silent. The birds are gone; the insects are dead.

P.S.

Dear Nishida, — I waited over last night to hunt up the quotation for you; and during the night my child was born. A very strong boy — dark eyes and hair; he has some of my features, some of Setsu's. Setsu is well enough to send kind words, and to tell you what I was intending to tell you myself — how

wish the boy to remain a Japanese citizen, you must register him in the mother's name only. If you register him in the father's name, he becomes a foreigner."

Of course we all want the child to be a Japanese citizen, as he will be the heir and stay of the old folks after I am dead — whether he goes abroad for a few years' study or no. Prudence seems to dictate the latter course. Yet the whole thing is a puzzle. By becoming myself a Japanese citizen, everything would be settled. Even that, however, is more difficult than it at first seemed. Again, I believe that I could become a Japanese citizen by making direct application to the Government; — but at the present time the result might not be for the best. An Englishman in Yokohama, who became a Japanese citizen, had his salary immediately reduced to a very small figure, with the observation: "Having become a Japanese citizen, you must now be content to live like one." I don't quite see the morality of the reduction; for services should be paid according to the market-value at least; — but there is no doubt it would be made. As for America, and my relatives in England, I am married: that has been duly announced. Perhaps I had better wait a few years, and then become a citizen. Being a Japanese citizen would, of course, make no difference whatever as to my relations in any civilized countries abroad. It would only make some difference in an uncivilized country — such as revolutionary South

America, where English or French or American protection is a good thing to have. But the long and the short of the matter is that I am anxious only about Setsu's and the boy's interests; my own being concerned only at that point where their injury would be Setsu's injury. I suppose I must trust to fate and the gods. If you can suggest anything good to do, however, I will be very grateful.

Every day, it strikes me more and more how little I shall ever know of the Japanese. I have been working hard at a new book, which is now half-finished, and consists of philosophical sketches chiefly: It will be a very different book from the "Glimpses," and will show you how much the Japanese world has changed for me. I imagine that sympathy and friendship are almost impossible for any foreigner to obtain — because of the amazing difference in the psychology of the two races. We only guess at each other without understanding; and it is only a very keen guesser, indeed, of large experience, who can ever guess correctly. I have met no one else like you. Nothing is so curious as to sit down and talk for hours with a Japanese of the ordinary Tōkyō modernized class. You understand all he says, and he understands all you say — but neither understands more than the words. The ideas behind the words are so different, that the more we talk the less we know each other. In the case of the students, I found myself obliged to invent a new method of teaching. I now teach my

higher classes psychologically. I give them lectures and dictations on various difficulties of the preposition, for example, starting out with the announcement that they must not allow themselves to think of the Japanese preposition at all. . . .

I have followed this plan with great success in teaching the articles, the value of English idioms, etc., and the comparative force of verbs. But it shows how hopeless for a stranger to see deeply into the Japanese mind. I am taking almost exactly the opposite ground to that of Lowell.

Faithfully ever

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO OCHIAI

KUMAMOTO, *January*, 1894

DEAR OCHIAI, — Many thanks for your kind letter, with its kind wishes — and many happy New Years to you.

I have been very glad to hear of your success at school, and all the news about your reading. I think Mr. Nishida's plan is very wise and good. It is true that the lives of such men as Clive and Hastings — and above all Napoleon — are full of interest and romance, because they show the wonderful things that can be achieved by force of character united with great intellect — Clive being the best man, morally, of the three. But, on the other hand, it is sadly true that the genius and the courage of those three wonderful men were not employed in the

noblest way, but most often in a bad cause. Strong characters are very attractive, because those who read about them take pleasure in imagining what they would do if they had the same power and opportunity. But strong characters are only really admirable when they are employed in a good, just, noble cause. And of such characters, the number in Western history is few. Pericles, Miltiades, Epaminondas, were nobler than Alexander; yet people like to read about Alexander, who was not a good man. Marcus Aurelius was nobler than Cæsar; but people like to read more about Cæsar, because he was a great conqueror. And so on through all Western history. There is splendour and honour in brave fighting for what is right; but I do not think we ought to allow ourselves to praise brave fighting for what is wrong. Bravery is noble only when the object is noble. As a quality, it is not peculiar to man at all; — a wild bull is braver than any general. It is very noble to sacrifice one's life for a good cause — for love of parents, country, duty; but we ought not to admire the throwing away of life for an unjust cause. The real rule by which to measure what is admirable and what is despicable is the rule of Duty.

That is why I admire very, very much, all that was noble in the old Japanese life — its moral code, its household religion, and its unselfishness. Everything is now passing away. By the time you are as old as I now am, all Japan will have been changed; and I think you will remember with regret the kind-

ness and the simplicity of heart and the pleasant manners of the Old Japan, that used to be all about you. The New Japan will be richer and stronger and in many things wiser; but it will neither be so happy nor so kindly as the old.

Well, I trust you will have all possible success — not only in your school-life, but in all your life to come. I have hopes you will do great and good things, and that I will hear of them.

Ever affectionately yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO MASANOBU ŌTANI

KUMAMOTO, *March*, 1894

MY DEAR ŌTANI, — To study philology, with the idea of becoming a philologist, scarcely seems to me a hopeful undertaking for you. Philology means a great deal, including the comparative study of languages; and it requires a very special natural gift in acquiring languages, to be of any very practical value to you. It would also require, I think, years of study in foreign universities. I am not quite sure what you mean by philology, and what your purpose in following that course would be. You might, of course, do as many do — take the literary and philological course at the university. But the question, to my mind, seems to be this: "What would be the practical value of such studies afterwards?" Do you wish to become a Professor of Philology? Do you wish to give your life to the scientific study of lan-

guages? If you do, are you quite sure you have the particular kind of talent required (for, remember, everybody cannot become a philologist any more than everybody can become a mathematician)?

The truth is, I do not know enough about your circumstances and intentions and abilities to advise you well. I can only tell you *in a general way* what I think.

I think you ought not to study what would not be of *practical* use to you in after-life. I am always glad to hear of a student studying engineering, architecture, medicine (if he has the particular moral character which medicine requires), or any branch of applied science. I do not like to see all the fine boys turning to the study of law, instead of to the study of science or technology. Of course much depends upon the mathematical faculty. If you have that faculty, I would strongly advise you to direct all your studies toward a scientific profession — something really practical — engineering, architecture, electricity, chemistry, etc. If you should ask which, I could not tell you, because I do not know your own highest capacities in such directions. I would only say — "Whatever you are most sure of loving as a practical profession."

Japan wants no more lawyers now; and I think the professions of literature and of teaching give small promise. What Japan needs are scientific men; and she will need more and more of them every year. To-day you are fortunate; but nothing in this

world is sure. Suppose you were obliged suddenly to depend entirely on your own unassisted power to make money — would it not then be necessary to do something practical? Certainly it would. And *according to the rarity of your abilities* would be your remuneration — your money-making power. Even the Queen of England obliged her children to learn professions.

Now scientific men are still comparatively rare in Japan. The science-classes in the colleges are small. Many students begin the study — but they find it hard for them, and give it up. Nevertheless, it is *just because it is hard* that it is so important and of such high value to the person who masters it. If you were my son, or brother, I would say to you, "Study science — applied science; study for a practical profession." As for languages and other subjects, you can study them whenever you please. The practical knowledge is the only important knowledge now — and your whole life will depend upon your present studies.

You asked whether philology was difficult. Science *is* difficult — really difficult; but everything worth having in this world is difficult to get, exactly in proportion to its value. The only question, I think, should be, "What study will be most useful to me all through life?" But not whether it is difficult. What is important to know is always difficult to learn. Philology is difficult; practical science is difficult; — both are very difficult. But philology

would never be of much use to you, unless you have a natural genius for language-study. And science would be of immense value to you, whether you have any genius or not. You will need, however, as I said before, mathematical study to fit you for that. And I would also remind you of this:

Hundreds of students leave the university without any real profession, and without any practical ability to make themselves useful. All cannot become teachers, or lawyers, or clerks. They become soshi, or they become officials, or they do nothing of any consequence. Their whole education has been of no real use to them, because it has not been *practical.* Men can succeed in life only by their ability to *do* something, and three fourths of the university students can *do* nothing. Their education has been only *ornamental.*

Faithfully yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, *April* 4, 1894

DEAR NISHIDA, — You are becoming a very *indifferent* correspondent, if one should judge by scarcity of letters — so I suppose I am not to hear from you again until something extraordinary happens. So runs the world away from a man. But never shall I be able to understand the people of "the most Eastern East."

Well, I have been to Kompira — in a fune-fune

to Tadotsu, thence by rail to the wonderful, quaint old town. We took Kaji along. He never cries now, and behaved so well that on all the railroads and steamers people fell in love with him and played with him. He made the acquaintance of many politicians, of surveyors, of some silk merchants, of two captains, of a naval surgeon, of many gentle women, of the miko at Kompira, and — I am sorry to say — of some geisha. However, that was because he was very young, and did not know. I hope when he gets bigger he will be more reserved with his smiles. One thing showed his good taste: he was especially attracted by the two young miko, who were really very sweet and pretty — the prettiest I ever saw, and he made one of them smile even during her dance. I have sent a better picture of him.

I should much rather be in a country-school again. However, so far as I can see, the same trouble is going to find its way into all the public schools, and stay there, until some means be devised of removing schools altogether from the domain of politics by something like the American system. The American system is imperfect; but it has at least this merit — that the leading citizens and merchants of a place can act as boards of directors, and that the temporary officials proper cannot meddle directly in school matters at all. Thus the school interests are taken care of by those most directly concerned in their welfare, and not by

strangers. Each community supports its own school by a general tax. Of course in so corrupt a country as America the pecuniary side of the question is attended with some ugly stealing; but that is done before the money is placed in the hands of the directors, and is done at a serious risk. In some American States, too, the textbooks are meddled with by politicians. But I think it might be quite possible in Japan to adopt a system of school-support, which, while removing the schools from the power of the Kenchō to meddle with them, would also establish something like permanency in their management and method. At present everything is so unpermanent and unsteady that one feels the tendency is to dissolution rather than integration.

Ever very truly yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. I forgot your question about the summer vacation. I have not yet been able to decide exactly what to do, but it is at least certain that I go to Tōkyō, and that I hope to meet you there. Should anything prevent you from going, I may try to meet you elsewhere. I should like to see you, and hear some more of the same wonderful things you used to tell me — which you will read in that much-delayed book. By the way, I did not tell you that the publishers concluded to delay it again, on account of what they call the trade-season. I suppose they

are right, but it is very provoking. Including the index the book makes about seven hundred pages, in two volumes. Meantime I have half written a philosophical book about Japanese life.

Ever faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *Spring*, 1894

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . Are you reading the "Atlantic" at all? There is a wonderful story by Mrs. Deland, "Philip and his Wife." Philip's wife makes me think always of E. B.

The problem of merely being able to live. What a plague it is! And the pain of life is n't hunger, is n't want, is n't cold, is n't sickness, is n't physical misery of any kind: it is simply moral pain caused by the damnable meanness of those who try to injure others for their own personal benefit or interest. That is really all the pain of the struggle of life.

Ever faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *May*, 1894

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . I think there was one mistake in the story of Œdipus and the Sphinx. It was the sweeping statement about the Sphinx's alternative. It is n't true that she devoured every one who could n't answer her riddles. Everybody

meets the Sphinx in life; — so I can speak from authority. She does n't kill people like me — she only bites and scratches them; and I've got the marks of her teeth in a number of places on my soul. She meets me every few years and asks the same tiresome question — and I have latterly contented myself with simply telling her, "I don't know."

It now seems to me that I was partly wrong in a former letter to you about business morality: I took much too narrow a view of the case, perhaps. The comparison between the Western and Oriental brain — which everybody is forced to make after a few years' sojourn here — now appears to me appalling in its results. The Western business man is really a very terrible and wonderful person. He is the outcome, perhaps, of a mediæval wish. For types are created by men's wishes — just as men themselves are created. The greatest teaching of science is that no Body made us — but we made ourselves under the smart stimulus of pain. Well, as I was saying, the business man is an answer to a wish. (You know about the frogs who asked Jupiter for a King.) In the age of robber-barons, racks, swordmills, and droit de cuissage — men prayed Jupiter for Law, Order, System. Jupiter (in the shape of a very, very earnest desire) produced the Business Man. He represents insatiate thirst of dominion, supreme intellectual aggressive capacity, faultless practical perceptivity, and the art of hand-

ling men exactly like pawns. But he represents also Order, System, Law. He is Organization, and is King of the Earth. The pawns cry out, "We are not pawns." But he always politely answers, "I am sorry to disagree with you, but I find it expedient for our mutual interest to consider you pawns; besides, I have no time to argue the matter. If you think you are not pawns, you must show the faculty of Organization."

The tyranny of the future must be that of Organization: the monopoly, the trust, the combination, the associated company — representing supremely perfect mathematical unification of Law, Order, and System. Much more powerful than the robber-baron, or Charlemagne, or Barbarossa, these are infinitely less human — having no souls, etc. (What would be the use of souls! — souls only waste time.) Business is exact and dangerous and powerful like a colossal dynamo: it is the extreme of everything men used to pray for — and it is *not* what they did *not* pray for. Perhaps they would like the robber-baron better.

We little petty outsiders — the gnats hovering about life — feel the world is changing too quickly: all becoming methodical as an abacus. There is n't any more room for us. Competition is of no use. Law, Order, and System fill the places without consulting us — the editorial desks, the clerkships, the Government posts, the publishers' offices, the pulpits, the professorships, the sinecures as well as the

tough jobs. Where a worker is unnecessary, a pawn is preferred. (Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness! — provided with a good table and a regular supply of reading from Murray's circulating library!) One thing is dead sure: in another generation there can be no living by dreaming and scheming of art: only those having wealth can indulge in the luxury of writing books for their own pleasure. . . .

Faithfully ever

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *May*, 1894

DEAR HENDRICK, — So far from your letters not being interesting, they are always full of interest — first, simply because they are *your* letters; secondly, because they tell the evolution of you — showing how, after all, we are made by the eternal forces. That you become a business man, in every sense of the word, is inevitable. It would be wrong if you did not. It would be wrong not to love your profession. The evil of becoming a business man exists only for small men — dries small men up. Surely you are not small! There is nothing to regret — except perhaps a temporary darkness which may yield to enormous light later on. Some would say to you, "Always keep one little place in your heart from hardening." I would say nothing of the kind now: I think you are too large to be talked to in that way.

Suppose I try to illustrate by reference to the

scope of human thinking in general. Ethical theology might be represented then as an inverted pyramid — thus ▽ ; hard, skeptical science by a larger figure, pressing it down; the highest philosophy by a circle — something like this figure. The largest thought accepts all, surrounds all, absorbs all — like light itself. The ugly and the beautiful, the ignorant and the wise, the virtuous and the vile — all come within its recognition; nature and sins as well as societies and clubs — prisons and churches, brothels and houses. The very duties of observation forced upon you compel two things: the study of all moral and material details; the study of all combinations and wholes. And the larger the grasp of the whole the larger must become your power and value; for you will have to see eternal laws working down out of the unknown and thereafter ramifying and inter-ramifying into innumerable actions, reactions, disintegrations, and crystallizations. The horrible thing about business, men say, is that it considers men as pawns. But if your sight becomes large enough — if your thought widens enough — you *must* look upon men as pawns. To be a brother to all you cannot. To be a friend to many you cannot. You become the agent — not of the Commercial Union Assurance Co. only — but the special agent of infinite laws; and if you act efficiently in that

capacity, you cannot do very wrong. The Cosmos will be responsible for you.

The business man to-day is the king of the earth; merchants and bankers are the rulers, and will for all time be, while industrialism continues necessary. They seek and win power, and all the good things of life; they also prevent others from getting either. They may not be poets, philosophers, didactic teachers, artists; but their mental organization is undoubtedly the highest — because its achievements represent the mastery of the highest difficulties, the deepest problems, the most intricate riddles. Certainly this higher organization is obtained at a heavy cost in the majority of cases. The emotions dry up in the evolution of it, and the moral sense weakens. But because this must happen in the majority of cases when any *new* faculty is being developed, it is far from happening in all. The man whose vision is vast enough can scarcely do more evil than a god. He cannot injure his world voluntarily without suffering from his own action. He must study his world as a naturalist his ant-hill. And even as a God he must feel the ultimate evil and good is not of him; but is being forever viewlessly woven in Shadow by the Fates of the Infinite — whose distaff twists the thread of his own life, and whose will guides his own courses.

The great desire would be for the combination of emotion with knowledge, of philosophy with mathematics, of Plato with a Napoleon, or Spinoza

with a Gould. This will come. Now it is very rare. . . .

You might reply, "In the present order of things the combination would ruin the working-power of the man. The Gould could not act the Gould if combined with the Spinoza — nor could the Napoleon se foule de la vie d'un million d'hommes if crossed with a Plato."

I would answer, "Not in the elder generation, but why not to-day? If the moral laws that in a Spinoza would have checked a Gould, or in a Plato checked a Napoleon, were essentially limited in other years, are they so to-day? If the two philosophers had had larger horizons of thinking, would they have recognized a tether — or would they not rather have viewed themselves as mere force-atoms in an infinite electric stream? Are there not now recognitions of laws transcending all human ethics? — laws of which Goethe threw out such weird suggestions? — and must not business, from its very nature, drift into the knowledge of these laws?"

To-day, it is true, the highest possible type of business man would have to follow the small policy of the majority. But certainly he can be like one of those compound double-engines — whereof the best half is kept idle in reserve — always oiled and speckless and ready for rare emergencies or opportunities. If something within you regrets something else that is passing away, that need not be any alarming sign. The mere fact that the regret exists, indicates higher

possibilities. Don't you remember Emerson's extraordinary lines:

> Though thou love her as thyself —
> As a self of purer clay, —
> Though her parting dim the day
> Stealing grace from all alive, —
> *Heartily know,*
> *When half-gods go*
> *The Gods arrive!*

The dear little psyche is going? Well, let her go! Regret her a little — that is sweet and good. Feel lonesome for her awhile. Wait. Then make yourself a new soul, large enough to wrap round the whole world, like the Æther.

Faithfully ever

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO PAGE M. BAKER

KUMAMOTO, 1894

DEAR PAGE, — Though I never hear from you directly, the "Times-Democrat" brings me occasionally very emphatic proof that I am not forgotten, and am perhaps forgiven. So I venture a line or two, hoping you will not show the letter to anybody.

I told you some years ago I was married; but I did not tell you I had a son — who is, of course, dearer than my own life to me. Curiously, he is neither like his mother nor like me: he takes after some English ancestor — for he is grey-eyed, fair-haired (curly chestnut), and wonderfully strong: he is going, if he lives, to be a remarkably powerful

man; and, I hope, a more sensible man than his foolish dad.

Well, now two perils menace me. First, the immense reaction of Japan — reasserting her individuality against all foreign influence, which has resulted in the discharge of most of the high-paid foreign employees; secondly, the war with China. The Japanese — essentially a fighting race, as Bantams are — will probably win the battles every time; but if China be in dead, bitter earnest, *she* will win the war. (Probably her chances will be snatched from her by foreign intervention.) But whatever be the end of this enormous complication, Japan is going to empty her treasury. The chances for Government employees are dwindling: my contract runs only till March, and the chances are zero.

Of course, I can peg along somehow — getting odd jobs from newspapers, etc., doing a little teaching of English, French, or Spanish. I can't help thinking I would do better to go abroad — especially at a time when to every American a hundred cents is worth nearly two hundred Japanese cents.

Here goes. Could you get me anything to do if I started in the spring for America? I mean something good enough to save money at. I am past all nonsense now, and for myself only would need very little. But it would not be for myself that I should go. I should want to be sure of being able to send money to Japan, by confining my own wants to good living and an occasional book or two. If you could

get me something anywhere south of Mason and Dixon's line, I should try to be practically grateful in some way. I am not in the least desirous of seeing Boston or New York or Philadelphia — or being obliged to exist by machinery. I would rather infinitely be in Memphis or Charleston or Mobile or — glorious Florida.

Or can you get me anything educational in Spanish-America? I could scarcely take my people to the United States — but to South America I might try later on. I am now forty-four, and all grey as a badger. Unless I can make enough to educate my boy well, I don't know what I am worth — but I feel that I shall have precious little time to do it in. Add twenty to forty-four — and how much is left of a man?

Perhaps you will think — if I am worth thinking about at all: "Well, why were you such a d——d fool as to go and have a son?" Ask the gods! Really *I* don't know.

Ever faithfully — or, as the Japanese would say, *un*faithfully — yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *June*, 1894

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . We were chatting last time about the morality of business. Now let me tell you how the question strikes an intelligent Japanese student.

"Sir, what was your opinion when you first came to our country about the old-fashioned Japanese? Please be frank with me."

"You mean the old men, who still preserve the old customs and courtesy — men like Mr. Akizuki, the Chinese teacher?"

"Yes."

"I think they were much better men than the Japanese of to-day. They seemed to me like the ideals of their own gods realized. They seemed to me all that was good and noble."

"And do you still think as well of them?"

"I think better of them, if anything. The more I see the Japanese of the new generation, the more I admire the men of the old."

"But you must have, as a foreigner, also observed their defects."

"What defects?"

"Such weaknesses or faults as foreigners would observe."

"No. According as a man is more or less perfectly adapted to the society to which he belongs, so is he to be judged as a citizen and as a man. To judge a man by the standards of a society totally different to his own would not be just."

"That is true."

"Well, judged by that standard, the old-fashioned Japanese were perfect men. They represented fully all the virtues of their society. And that society was morally better than ours."

"In what respect?"

"In kindness, in benevolence, in generosity, in courtesy, in heroism, in self-sacrifice, in simple faith, in loyalty, in self-control — in the capacity to be contented with a little — in filial piety."

"But would those qualities you admire in the old Japanese suffice for success in Western life — practical success?"

"Why, no."

"The qualities required for practical success in a Western country are just those qualities which the old Japanese did not possess, are they not?"

"I am sorry to say they are."

"And the old Japanese society cultivated those qualities of unselfishness and courtesy and benevolence which you admire at the sacrifice of the individual. But Western society cultivates the individual by a competition in mere powers — intellectual power, power of calculating and of acting?"

"Yes."

"But in order that Japan may be able to keep her place among nations, she *must* adopt the industrial and financial methods of the West. Her future depends upon industry and commerce; and these cannot be developed if we continue to follow our ancient morals and manners."

"Why?"

"Not to be able to compete with the West means ruin; yet in order to compete with the West, we

must follow the methods of the West — and these are contrary to the old morality."

"Perhaps — "

"I do not think there is any 'perhaps.' To do any business on a large scale, we must not be checked by the idea that we should never take any advantage if another be injured by it. Those who are checked by emotional feeling, where no check is placed upon competition, must fail. The law of what you call the struggle for existence is that the strong and clever succeed, and the weak and foolish fail. But the old morality condemned such competition."

"That is true."

"Then, sir, no matter how good the old morality may seem to be, we can neither make any great progress in industry or commerce or finance, nor even preserve our national independence, by following it. We must forsake our past, and substitute law for morality."

"But it is not a good substitute."

"It seems to me that it has proved a good substitute in Western countries — England especially — if we are to judge by material progress. We will have to learn to be moral by reason, not by emotion. Knowledge of law, and the reasons for obeying law, must teach a rational morality of some sort at last."

Pretty good reasoning for a Japanese boy, was n't it? He goes to the university next month — a

splendid fellow. Later the Government is to send him abroad.

Ever faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KUMAMOTO, *August*, 1894

DEAR NISHIDA, — Many, many best thanks for the excellent photograph of yourself, and your kindest letter. The photograph brought so vividly before me again the kind eyes that saw so much for me, and the kind lips that told me so many wise, good things, and advised me and helped me so much — that I could not but feel more sorry than ever at having missed you.

Mr. Senke has sent me the most beautiful letter, which I hope to answer by this same mail. What a divine thing the old Japanese courtesy was! and how like Kami-sama the dear old men who remember it, and preserve it. Of course Mr. Senke is a young man, but *his* courtesy is the old courtesy. The high schools seem to me to be ruining Japanese manners, and therefore morals — because morals are manners to a certain extent. Those who lose the old ways never replace them; they cannot learn foreign courtesy, which is largely a matter of tone — tone of voice, address, touch of minds, and benevolence in small things, which is our politeness. So they remain without any manners at all, and their hearts get hardened in some queer way. They cease to be

lovable, and often become unbearable. I hope the great reaction will bring back, among other things, some of the knightly old ways.

I send a reprint of my last Japanese story. Hope my book will reach you soon, and will not displease you. Of course, you will find in it many mistakes — as any book written by a foreigner must be rich in errors. But the general effect of the book will not be bad, I think. I am now trying to write a sketch about Yuko Hatakeyama, the girl who killed herself at Kyōto in May, 1891, for loyalty's sake. The fact is full of wonderful meaning — as indicating a national sentiment.

Kazuo is crawling about, opening drawers, and causing much trouble. His eyes have again changed colour — from blue to brown, like my own; but his hair remains chestnut. His upper teeth are well out, and everybody wonders how strong he is. He has one Japanese virtue: he does not cry, and keeps his self-control even when hurt. I hope he will keep all these traits. My whole anxiety is now about him: I must send him, or, if possible, take him abroad — for a scientific education, if he prove to have a good head. That will be expensive. But I hope to do it. I do not think a father should leave his son alone in a foreign school, if it can be helped: he ought to be always near him, until manhood. And Setsu would feel at home soon in France or in Italy — at least at home enough to bear the life until Kazuo could get through a course or two.

The foreign community sorrows about the war — naturally. Business is paralyzed. Every one feels the Japanese will win the fights. But who will win the war? That might be a question of money. Japan is daring to do what the richest country in Europe fears to do — because it costs so much to fight China.

And some of the Izumo boys are out there in the rice-fields of Chosŏn. I trust they will pass safely through all perils. Please send me any news of them you can.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

MATSUE, *September*, 1894

DEAR HENDRICK, — If ever I must go to America, I hope I can keep out of New York. The great nightmare of it always dwells with me — moos at me in the night, especially in the time of earthquakes. Of London I should be much less afraid. But in such great cities I do not think a literary man can write any literature. Certainly not if he has to stay in the heart of the clockwork. Society withers him up — unless he have been born into the manner of it; and the complexities of the vast life about him he never could learn. Fancy a good romance about Wall Street — so written that the public could understand it! There is, of course, a tremendous romance there; but only a financier can really know the machinery, and his knowledge is technical. But

what can the mere littérateur do, walled up to heaven in a world of mathematical mystery and machinery! Your own city of Albany is a paradise compared to the metropolis: you are really very fortunate — very, very happy to be able to live at home.

Of course, there is a philosophy of good manners — too much of it, eh? There is Emerson, all suggestive — but touching eternal truths in his essays on conduct, behaviour, etc.; and there is Spencer, who traces back the history of nearly all good manners to the earliest period of savagery and perpetual war. (You know about the origin of the bow, of our forms of address, and of the forms of prayer.) Politeness survives longest and develops most elaborately under militant conditions, and diminishes in exact proportion as militancy decreases. That there should be less politeness in America than in other countries, and less in the Northern States than in the Southern, might be expected. This was true as to both conditions: it is now true probably only as to the first. With the growth of industrialism — the sense of equal chances, at least of equal rights before the law — the abolition of class distinctions — fine manners vanish more or less. Nevertheless, I fancy that under all the American roughness and lack of delicacy, or of that politeness which means "benevolence in small things," there is growing up a vast, deep feeling of human brotherhood — of genuine kindliness, which may show itself later under stabler

conditions. All now is unsettled. It is said that nearly all our *formal* politeness must eventually disappear under conditions of industrialism, and be replaced by something more real and more agreeable — kindly consideration, and natural desire to please. But that will be in ages and ages only after we are dead. There must be an end of all fighting first — of cruelty in competition, and this cannot happen until with intellectual expansion, population ceases to so increase as to enforce competition without mercy.

The tendency now (referring to what you said about trusts) seems to point indeed to what Spencer calls "The Coming Slavery." Monopolies and trusts must continue to grow and multiply — must eventually tend to coalesce — must ultimately hold all. Bellamy's ideas will be partly carried out, but in no paradisaical manner. The State itself will become the one monstrous trust. Socialism will be promised all, and be compelled to work against its own ends unconsciously. The edifice is even now being reared in which every man will be a veritable slave to the State — the State itself a universal monopoly, or trust. Then every life will be regulated to infinitesimal details, and the working population of the whole West find themselves situated just as men in factories or on railroads are situated. The trust will be nominally for the universal benefit, and must for a time so seem to be. But just so surely as human nature is not perfect, just so surely will the directing

class eventually exploit the wonderful situation — just as some Roman rulers exploited the world. Assuredly anarchy will eventuate; but first — in spite of all that human wisdom can do — nations will pass under the most fearful tyranny ever known. And perhaps centuries of persistent effort will scarcely suffice to burst the fetters which Socialism now seeks to impose on human society; — the machinery will be too frightfully perfect, too harmonious in operation, too absolutely exact and of one piece — to be easily attacked. As well try with naked hands to pierce the side of an iron-clad. The law, the police, the military power, religious influence, commercial and industrial interests — all will be as One, working to preserve the form of the new socialism. To seek redress, to demand change, were then sheer madness. And even the power to flee away out of the land, to dwell among beasts and birds, might be denied. Liberty of opinion, which we all boast of now, would be then less possible than in the time of the sway of Torquemada. . . .

You have heard of the Japanese facile victories by land and sea. I should not be surprised to hear of their winning every engagement, and capturing Pekin. But what the end will be for the country, who can say? The whole thing is the last huge effort of the race for national independence. Under the steady torturing pressure of our industrial civilization — being robbed every year by unjust treaties — Japan has determined to show her military power

to the world by attacking her old teacher, China. At the same time she has asked and obtained from England such revision of the treaty as would not only protect her against the danger of large fresh investments of foreign capital, but would probably result in driving existing capital away. I cannot think that the United States will be short-sighted enough to grant the same terms. For instance, though the country is to be opened to foreign settlement, no Englishman can hold land except on lease; and the lease, by Japanese law, expires with the death of the lessor. So that if I build a stone house, and my landlord die in twenty years after, I must be at the mercy of his heir, or carry away my house on my back.

It is an ugly business, this war. It may leave Japan absolutely independent, as in the days of Ieyasu. But will that be best for her? I am no longer sure. The people are still good. The upper classes are becoming corrupt. The old courtesy, the old faith, the old kindness are vanishing like snow in sun.

Ever affectionately

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO OCHIAI

KUMAMOTO, *September*, 1894

DEAR MR. OCHIAI, — . . . I was much interested in what your letter related about the doves leaving Kizuki, and about the O mamori.

It is a curious fact that nearly the same story is told in Kumamoto, in regard to Katō Kiyomasa. At the Nichiren temple of Hommyōji the helmet, armour, and sword of the great Captain were always preserved. Lately they disappeared, and some say they were sent to Korea — to stimulate the zeal of the army. But some of the people say that in the night horse-hoofs were heard in the temple court; and that a great shadowy horseman, in full armour, was seen to pass. So it is whispered that Kiyomasa rose up from his grave, and buckled on his armour, and departed to lead the Imperial Armies to glory and conquest.

Thanks also for the very interesting note about the Emperor Go-Daigo. You know I visited the place where he lived at Oki, and the little village — Chiburi-mura — from which he made his escape in the fishermen's boat.

What you said about the mamori of the soldier reminds me that at the ujigami here little charms are being given to thousands of soldiers. They are very narrow, and contrived so as to be slipped into the lining (ura) of a uniform.

Thanks for your two kindest letters. I shall write you again another day — this is only my answer to one of your two letters; the other I still owe you for.

Best wishes and regards to you always.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KŌBE, *December*, 1894

DEAR HENDRICK, — So it was *you* that sent me "Trilby" — the magical thing! I never knew till the Spencer came, and Kipling's "Jungle Book." And the joke is that I thanked another man for the gift of "Trilby," and the beast never let on. And I wrote a two and one-half column review of "Trilby" to please *him*. Oh, you rascal! why did n't you tell me? Love to you for "Trilby."...

Glad you liked my first book on Japan. The "Tribune" essay vexed me.... The curious fact of the article was the statement about the influence of the *decadents* and of Verlaine being "apparent." Never read a line of Verlaine in my life — and only know enough of the decadent school to convince me that the principle is scientifically wrong, and that to study the stuff is mere waste of time.

I am writing one article a day for one hundred yen a month. Exchange is so low now that the one hundred represents something less than fifty in American money. And my eyes, or eye, giving out. Curious! — cold seriously affects my remnant of sight. If I had a few thousand I should go to a hot climate during the winter months. Heat gives me good vision. Even a Japanese hot bath temporarily restores clearness of sight....

Of course, we shall never see each other again in this world. And what is the use of being unkind —

after all? Life to us literary folk — small and great — is so short, and we are never in competition, like business men who *must* compete — *what* is the use of meanness? I suppose there must be some use. The effect is certainly to convince a man of "fourty-four" that the less he has to do with his fellow men the better — or, at least, that the less he has to do with the so-called "cultured" the better. . . .

The other day you told me of some queer changes in your inner life wrought by the influences of the outer. In my case the changes are very unpleasant. I can't feel towards men generally any longer as I used to — I feel, in short, a little misanthropic. The general facts seem to be that all realities of relations between men are of self-interest in the main; that the pleasures of those relations are illusions — dependent upon youth, power, position, etc., for degree of intensity. No man, as a general rule, shows his soul to another man; he shows it only to a woman — and then only with the assurance that she won't give him away. As a matter of fact, she can't: — the Holy Ghost takes care or that! No woman unveils herself to another woman — only to a man; and what she unveils he cannot betray. He can only talk of her body, if he is brute enough to wish to: the inner being, of which he has had some glimpses, can be pictured only in a language which he cannot use. But what a fighting masked-ball the whole thing is!

Have you read Huxley's views on Ethics and

Evolution? They have been a great revelation to me. They make it perfectly plain why men cannot be good to one another on general principles without causing trouble in the order of the universe. They also explain the immorality of Nature. Cosmic principles afford explanations of — but not consolations for — individual experiences.

L. H.

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KUMAMOTO, *December*, 1894

DEAR HENDRICK, — Of course I shall teach the "Jungle Book" to the little fellow, when he gets big enough. How pretty of you to send it. I sent some little prints — don't know if you like them; in an album they would perhaps interest your friends who have not been in Japan. I shall look out for seeds for you regularly hereafter.

About Emerson. Last spring I got a pretty edition of him from H. M. & Co. and I digested him. He is only suggestive, but wondrously so at times, as in his poems. As a suggester he will always be great. The talk about his truisms must depend upon the knowledge of the speaker. Emerson will be large or small — commonplace or profound — according to the reader's knowledge of the thought of the age.

My reading out here has been pretty heavy. I have had to digest a good deal of Buddhist and Chinese stuff, of course. My philosophical favour-

ites are still Spencer and Huxley, Lewes, and Fiske and Clifford. I made Kipling's acquaintance out here (I mean his books), and told you what I think of him. Next to Kipling I like Stevenson. But I have really read very little of anything new. Browning is a pet study still. Somehow I have tired of Tennyson — don't exactly know why.

The labour of a mother is something which, I imagine, no man without a child can understand. We big folks forget what our own mothers did for us — and we have no real chance to see all that other mothers do. My whole family are always caring for the boy: his interest and necessities rule the whole house — but the mother!! for a single hour she has no rest with him (Japanese give the breast for two years) — no sleep except when he allows it — and yet it all is joy for her. How they have already taught him Japanese politeness, how to prostrate himself before his father the first thing in the morning and last at night — to ask for things, putting his hands in the proper way — to smile — to know the names of things before he can pronounce them — I can't understand. Angel-patience and love alone could have done it. I want her to wean him — but she won't hear of it; and the old grandmother gets angry at the mere idea. It is only in home-relation that people are true enough to each other — show what human nature is — the beauty of it, the divinity of it. We are otherwise all on our guard against each other. I cannot say how happy I think

you are — you can see Souls without armour or mail — loving you. That is the joy of life, after all — is n't it?

LAFCADIO HEARN

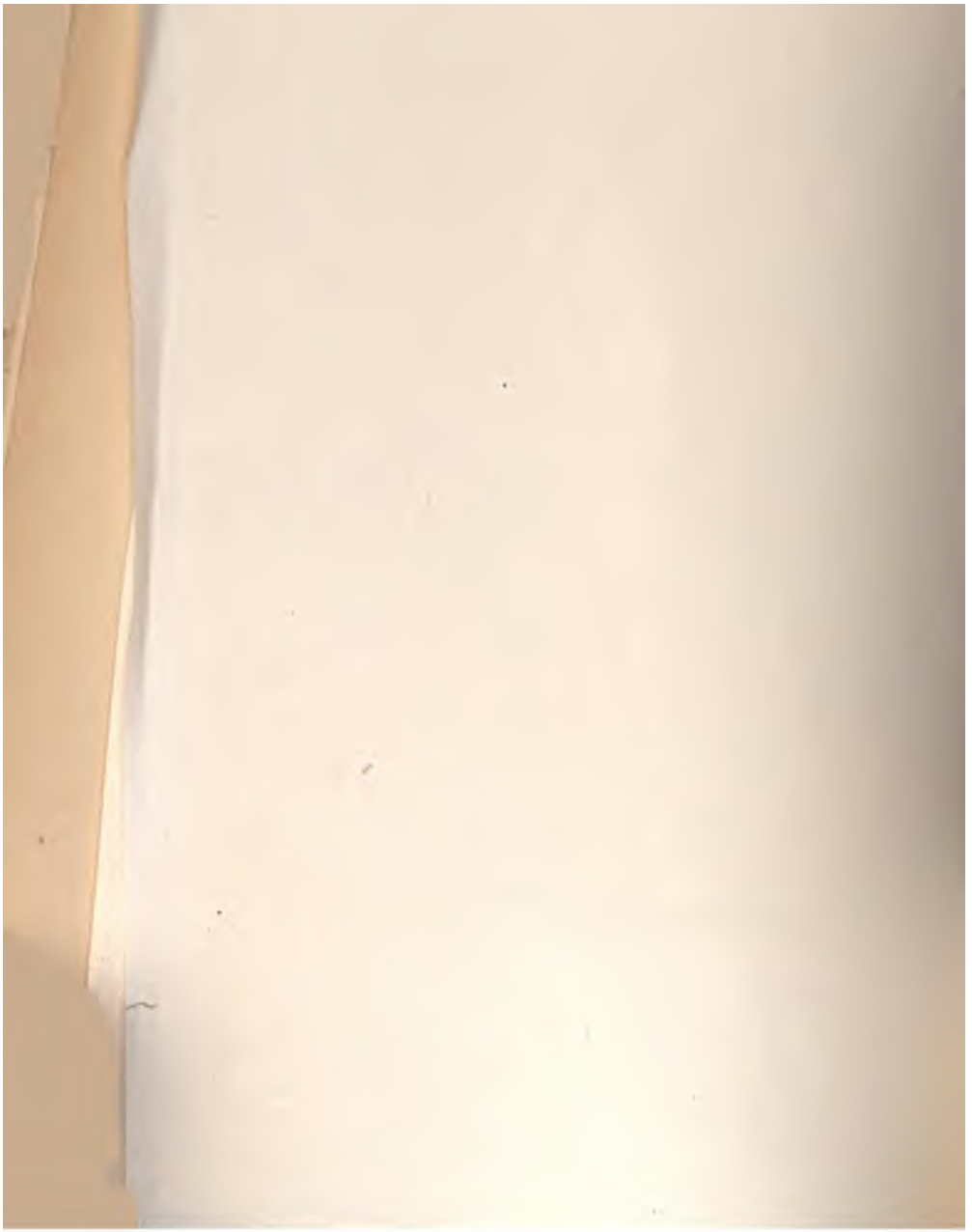
TO SENTARŌ NISHIDA

KŌBE, *January*, 1895

DEAR NISHIDA, — I have just written to Mr. Senke, to apologize for delay in sending my annual contribution — which I had hoped to be able to do as a Japanese citizen. But this may give me a chance to write again, when I get naturalized.

The Governor of Hyōgo did a very strange thing — informed the British Consul that I was to make a declaration in writing, presumably before the Consul, that I intended to be faithful to the Emperor of Japan, and to obey the laws. I did make the declaration; and the Consul is kind enough to forward it. But I believe he is doing this out of personal kindness; for I do not think it is according to English ideas, much less English laws, for a Consul to accept such a declaration at all. Indeed, what was asked was equivalent to requesting the English Consul to accept an English subject's renunciation of allegiance to Queen Victoria — and I am astonished that the Consul, who is a rigid disciplinarian, in this case allowed me to submit to him any declaration on the subject. One thing is sure, that others who want to become Japanese subjects are going to have plenty of trouble. These measures are entirely

Mrs. Hearn's Reception-Room



new, and quite different to anything ever before exacted — for example, in the case of Warburton and other Kōbe residents who became Japanese subjects, perhaps for business reasons.

I am thinking of building Setsu a house, either in Kōbe or Kyōto. When I say Kōbe, I mean Hyōgo, really; for I cannot well afford to buy land at forty to seventy dollars per tsubo in the back streets of Kōbe. In Hyōgo, I can do better. Setsu and I both agree that Kōbe is warmer than Kyōto; but, except for the winter months, I should rather live in Kyōto than in any part of Japan. Tōkyō is the most horrible place in Japan, and I want to live in it just as short a time as possible. The weather is atrocious; — the earthquakes are fearsome; — the foreign element and the Japanese officialism of Tōkyō must be dreadful. I want to feel and see *Japan:* there is no Japan in Tōkyō. But in spite of all I say, Setsu thinks of Tōkyō just as a French lady thinks of Paris. After she has passed a winter there, perhaps she will not like Tōkyō so much. I imagine that she thinks the Tōkyō — the really beautiful Tōkyō — of the old picture-books, and the bank-bills, still exists. Then she knows all the famous names — the names of the bridges and streets and temples — and these are associated in her mind with the dramas and the famous stories and legends of Japan. Perhaps I should love Tōkyō just as much as she does, if I knew the history and the traditions of the country as well.

You will be pleased to hear that my books are attracting considerable attention now in England. It is very hard to win attention there, but much more important than to win it in America. "Out of the East" has made more impression in England than my first book did. I don't know what will be said of "Kokoro": it is a terribly "radical" book — at variance with all English conventions and beliefs. However, if you and my few Japanese friends like it, I shall be happy.

I wish you were here to eat some plum-pudding with me.

Oh! I forgot to tell you that Finck, who wrote that book about Japan, is rather celebrated (perhaps celebrated is too strong a word — *well known* is better) as the author of a book called "Romantic Love and Personal Beauty."

Ever faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KŌBE, *January*, 1895

DEAR HENDRICK: — Three books and a catalogue reached me — Mallock, Kipling, and a volume by Morris — for which more than thanks, the value much exceeding, I fear, the slight difference between us.

It now seems to me that time is the most precious of all things conceivable. I can't waste it by going out to hear people talk nonsense — or by going to

see pretty girls whom I can't marry, being married already — or by playing games of cards, etc., to kill time — or by answering letters written me by people who have neither real fine feeling nor real things to say. Of course I might on occasion do some one of these things — but, having done it, I feel that so much of my life has been wasted — sinfully wasted. There are rich natures who can afford the waste; but I can't, because the best part of my life has been wasted in wrong directions and I shall have to work like thunder till I die to make up for it. I shall never do anything remarkable; but I think I have caught sight of a few truths on the way.

I might say that I have become indifferent to personal pleasures of any sort — except sympathy and sympathetic converse; but this might represent a somewhat morbid state. What is more significant, I think, is the feeling that the greatest pleasure is to work for others — for those who take it as a matter of course that I should do so, and would be as much amazed to find me selfish about it as if an earthquake had shaken the house down. Really I am not affecting to think this; I feel it so much that it has become a part of me.

Then of course, I like a little success and praise — though a big success and big praise would scare me; but I find that even the little praise I have been getting has occasionally unhinged my judgment. And I have to be very careful.

Next, I have to acknowledge to feeling a sort of

resentment against certain things in which I used to take pleasure. I can't look at a number of the "Petit Journal pour Rire" or the "Charivari" without vexation, almost anger. I can't find pleasure in a French novel written for the obvious purpose of appealing to instincts that interfere with perception of higher things than instincts. I would not go to see the Paris opera if it were next door and I had a free ticket — or, if I did go, it would be for the sake of observing the pleasure given to somebody else. I should not like to visit the most beautiful lady and be received in evening dress. You see how absurd I have become — and this without any idea of principle about the matter, except the knowledge that I ought to avoid everything which does not help the best of myself — small as it may be. Whenever by chance I happen to make a deviation from this general rule, work suffers in consequence.

I think that on the whole I am gaining a little in the path; but I have regular fits of despondency and disgust about my work, of course. One day I think I have done well; the next that I am a hideous ass and fool. Much is a question of nervous condition. But I feel sure that a long-continued period of self-contentment would be extremely injurious to me; and that checks and failures and mockeries are indispensable medicine.

I read the books you sent me — Mallock only because *you* wished me to read it. I suppose it is the very best thing he ever did. How immensely

clever and keen and — immoral! It is a wonderful thing.

"The Wood beyond the World" astounded me. Its value is in the study of the quaint English; but you know that such a thing could not be written in modern English prose very well; and I must say that I feel like disputing the raison d'être thereof. It is simply a very naughty story.

Kipling is priceless — the single story of Purim Bagat is worth a kingdom; and the suggestive moral of human life is such a miracle! I can't tell you what pleasure it gave me. Indeed the three books — as representing three totally distinct fields of literary work — were a great treat.

My boy is quite well again, though we were very frightened about him. He suffers from the cold every winter (you know the Japanese never have fire in winter), but he is getting hardier, I trust. He is very fond of pictures and says funny things about the pictures in the "Jungle Book." I am off to the Southern Islands shortly — so you may not hear from me for some weeks.

Ever affectionately

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KŌBE, *January*, 1895

SINCE I wrote you last, you dear old fellow, I've been through some trouble. Indeed, the very *day* after writing you, I broke down, and had to remain

three weeks with compresses over my eyes in a dark room. I am now over it — able to write and read for a short time every day, but have been warned to leave routine newspaper work alone. Which I must do.

Your letter was — well, I don't just know what to call its quality: — there was a bracing tenderness in it that reminded me of a college friendship. Really, in this world there is nothing quite so holy as a college friendship. Two lads — absolutely innocent of everything wrong in the world or in life — living in ideals of duty and dreams of future miracles, and telling each other all their troubles, and bracing each other up. I had such a friend once. We were both about fifteen when separated, but had been together from ten. Our friendship began with a fight, of which I got the worst; — then my friend became for me a sort of ideal, which still lives. I should be almost afraid to ask where he is now (men grow away from each other so): but your letter brought his voice and face back — just as if his very ghost had come in to lay a hand on my shoulder. . . .

Kōbe is a nice little place. The effect on me is not pleasant, however. I have become too accustomed to the interior. The sight of foreign women — the sound of their voices — jars upon me harshly after long living among purely natural women with soundless steps and softer speech. (I fear the foreign women here, too, are nearly all of the savagely bourgeoise style — affected English and affected Ameri-

can ways prevail.) Carpets — dirty shoes — absurd fashions — wickedly expensive living — airs — vanities — gossip: how much sweeter the Japanese life on the soft mats — with its ever dearer courtesy and pretty, pure simplicity. Yet my boy can never be a Japanese. Perhaps, if he grows old, there will some day come back to him memories of his mother's dainty little world — the hibachi — the toko — the garden — the lights of the household shrine — the voices and hands that shaped his thought and guided every little tottering step. Then he will feel very, very lonesome — and be sorry he did not follow after those who loved him into some shadowy resting-place where the Buddhas still smile under their moss. . . .

Ever affectionately LAFCADIO

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *January*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — I'm able now to write and read a little every day — not much, as to reading: writing tires the eyes less. Glad you like "Glimpses," as I see by your last kind letter. Of course it is full of faults: any work written in absolute isolation must be. It's taking, though: the publishers announce a third edition already, and the notices have been good — in America, enthusiastic. "The Athenæum" praised it fervidly; but a few English papers abuse it. The mixture of blame and praise means literary success generally.

The earthquakes are really horrible I can sympathize with you.

The sensation of foreign life here is very unpleasant, after life in the interior. A foreign interior is a horror to me; and the voices of the foreign women — China-Coast tall women — jar upon the comfort of existence. Can't agree with you about the "genuine men and women" in the open ports. There are some — very, very few. (Thank the Gods I shall never have to live among them!) The number of Germans here makes life more tolerable, I fancy. They are plain, but homely, which is a virtue, and liberal, which commercial English or Americans (the former especially) seldom are. They have their own club and a good library. But life in Yunotsu or Hino-misaki, or Oki, with only the bare means for Japanese comfort, were better and cleaner and higher in every way than the best open ports can offer.

The Japanese peasant is ten times more of a gentleman than a foreign merchant could ever learn to be. Unfortunately the Japanese official, with all his civility and morality rubbed off, is something a good deal lower than a savage and meaner than the straight-out Western rough (who always has a kernel of good in him) by an inexpressible per cent. Carpets — pianos — windows — curtains — brass bands — churches! how I hate them!! And white shirts! — and yōfuku! Would I had been born savage; the curse of civilized cities is on me — and

I suppose I can't get away permanently from them. You like all these things, I know. I'm not expecting any sympathy — but thought you might like to know about the effect on me of a half-return to Western life. How much I could hate all that we call civilization I never knew before. How ugly it is I never could have conceived without a long sojourn in old Japan — the only civilized country that existed since antiquity. Them's my sentiments!

I have not yet been able to read Lowell's new book through. But he must have worked tremendously to write it. It is a very clever book — though disfigured by absolutely shameless puns. It touches truths to the quick — with a light sharp sting peculiar to Lowell's art. It is painfully unsympathetic — Mephistophelian in a way that chills me. It is scientific — but the fault of it strikes me as being that the study is applicable equally to Europe or America as to Japan. The same psychical phenomena may be studied out anywhere, with the same result. The race difference in persons, like the difference between life and not-life in biology, is only one of degree, not of kind. Still, it is a wonderful book.

Ever truly LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *January*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — To-day is a spring day and I can add a little to my screed. The weather brightens up my eyes.

I was thinking just now about the difference between the Japanese hyakushō and the English merchant.

My servant girl from Imaïchi — who cannot read or write — saw you at Kumamoto and said words to this effect: "He speaks Japanese like a great man. And he is so gentle and so kind." Vaguely something of the intellectual and moral side of you had reached and touched her simple mind. The other day a merchant said of you: "Chamberlain — Oh, yes. Met him at Miyanoshita. Tell you, he's a gentleman — plays a good game of whist!" There's appreciation for you. Which is the best soul of the two — my servant girl's or that merchant's?

A merchant, however, has inspired me with the idea of a sketch, to be entitled "His Josses"!...

On the other hand it strikes me that in another twenty years, or perhaps thirty, after a brief artificial expansion, all the ports will shrink. The foreign commerce will be all reduced to agencies. A system of small persecutions will be inaugurated and maintained to drive away all the foreigners who can be driven away. After the war there will be a strong anti-foreign reaction — outrages — police-repressions — temporary stillness and peace: then a new crusade. Life will be made wretched for Occidentals — in business — just as it is being made in the schools — by all sorts of little tricky plans which cannot be brought under law-provisions, or even so

defined as to appear to justify resentment — tricks at which the Japanese are as elaborately ingenious as they are in matters of etiquette and forms of other kinds. The nation will show its ugly side to us — after a manner unexpected, but irresistible.

The future looks worse than black. As for me, I am in a perpetual quandary. I suppose I'll have to travel West — and console myself with the hope of visiting Japan at long intervals.

Well, there's no use in worrying — one must face the music.

I am sorry your eyes are weak, too. What the devil of a trouble physical trouble is! — a dead weight check on will! Still, you have good luck in other ways, and after all, eye-trouble is only a warning in both our cases.

Ever truly LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *February*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — I had mailed you the American letter before your own most kind enclosure came, with the note from Makino. Of course this is beyond thanks — and I can't say very much about it. Since then I received from you also Lowell's six papers on Mars — which I have read, and return by this mail — and your friendly lines from Atami.

Just as you suggested in the Atami letter, I was feeling about matters. There would be special con-

ditions in New Orleans, on the paper of which I was ten years a staff-writer. I should have to work only a couple of hours a day in my own room, and would have opportunities of money-making and travel. There are risks, too — yellow fever, lawlessness, and personal enemies. But to leave Japan now would, of course, be like tearing one's self in two — and I am not sure but the ultimate nervous result would destroy my capacity for literary work. The best thing, I imagine, will be to ask my friend to keep the gate open for me, in case I have to go. The great thing for me is not to worry: worry and literary work will not harmonize. The work always betrays the strain afterward.

You say my friend writes nicely. He is about the most lovable man I ever met — an old-time Southerner, very tall and slight, with a singular face. He is so exactly an ideal Mephistopheles that he would never get his photograph taken. The face does not altogether belie the character — but the mockery is very tender play, and queerly original. It never offends. The real Mephistopheles appears only when there are ugly obstacles to overcome. Then the diabolical keenness with which motives are read and disclosed, and the lightning moves by which a plot is checkmated, or made a net for the plotter himself, usually startle people. He is a man of immense force — it takes such a one to rule in that community, but as a gentleman I never saw his superior in grace or consideration. I always loved

him — but like all whom I like, never could get quite enough of his company for myself.

The papers on Mars are quite weirdly suggestive — are they not? Just how much of the theories and the discoveries were Lowell's very own, I can't make out — though the papers are things to be thankful for. You know the physiological side of his psychology in "Occult Japan" is no more original than the "Miscellany" of a medical weekly.

By the way, I must point out a serious mistake he makes on page 293 — when he says that the absence of the belief in possession by other living men is a proof of the absence of personality in Japan. As a matter of fact there is no such absence. I alone know of three different forms of such beliefs — and know that one is extremely common. So that all the metaphysical structure of argument built upon the supposed absence of that belief vanishes into nothingness!

As Huxley says, that man who goes about the world "unlabelled" is sure to be punished for it. So I can't help thinking that I ought to have a label. Fancy the man who makes his bear drink champagne seeking my company on the ground that "Neither of us are Christians." The Ama-terasu-Ōmi-kami business first aroused my suspicions, but the phrase itself was so raw!

Compañia de uno
1 Compañia de ninguno;
Compañia de dos

2 Compañia de Dios;
Compañia de tres
3 Compañia es (but never for me);
Compañia de cuatro
4 Compañia del diablo.

This old Spanish hymn might have been made expressly about me — except in No. 3. I should feel more at home with you if I knew you would share my letters with nobody. This is all for yourself only. Ever gratefully, with more than regards

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *February*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — I never liked any letter I got from you more than the last — which brings us closer together. I suppose I have often misread you — being more supersensitive than I ought to be — and also finding certain of my best friends so differently soul-toned that I am often at a loss to understand hows and whys. But it is curious that we are absolutely at one, after all, on sociological questions, as your letter shows. Undoubtedly the "coming slavery," predicted by Spencer, will come upon us. A democracy more brutal than any Spartan oligarchy will control life. Men may not be obliged to eat at a public table; but every item of their existence will be regulated by law. The world will be sickened for all time of democracy as now preached. The future tyranny will be worse than any of old — for it will be a régime of moral rather

than physical pain, and there will be no refuge from it — except among savages. But, for all that, the people are good. They will be trapped through their ignorance, and held in slavery by their ignorance; and made, I suppose, in the eternal order, to develop a still higher goodness before they can reach freedom again.

I believe there is no point of your letter in which we are not thoroughly at accord. I have also been inclined to many schools of belief in these matters: I have been at heart everything by turns. It is like the history of one's religious experiences. And just as when, after emancipating one's self from the last mesh of the net of creeds, one sees for the first time the value-social and meaning of all, and the moral worth of many — so in sociological questions, it is by emancipation from faiths in politics that one learns what lies behind all politics — the necessity of the Conservative vs. the Radical, of the pleb. vs. the aristo. Then, if sympathetic with popular needs one still recognizes the æsthetic and moral value of ranks and orders; or, if belonging to the latter, one learns also to understand that the great, good, unhappy, moral, immoral, vicious, virtuous people are the real soil of all future hope — the field of the divine in Man.

But for all that, when conditions jar on me, I sometimes grumble and see only evil. What matter? I never look for it as a study. My work — though "no great shakes" — must show you that. At the

end of all experiences, bitter and pleasant, I try to sum up good only.

What I said about the Germans you may not have understood. I did not explain. There is, I think, a particular German characteristic which has its charm. Accustomed for generations to a communal form of life — totally different from that of the English — there has been developed among them a certain spirit of tolerance and a social inclination essentially German. Also the poverty of their country has nourished a tendency to sobriety of life, while the causes developing their educational system on a wonderful level of economy have brought the race, I believe, to a higher general plane than others. I don't mean that the top-shoots are higher than French or English; but I think the middle growth educationally is. At all events a German community in America or in Japan, while it remains German — has a peculiar charm — an independence of conventions, as distinguished from the religious and social codes — and an exterior affability — quite different from the individualism of other communities. Perhaps, however, the friendship never goes quite as deep as in those isolated natures so much harder to win.

The essay by Spencer you will find in a volume sent you by mail, and sent to me by my American friend. It did not appear in the old editions. Perhaps I may try the feat some day of a Japanese study on those lines — though I must acknowledge

that I now perceive several of my views entirely wrong. I also perceive how closely Lowell reached the neighbourhood of truth without being able, nevertheless, (or willing?) to actually touch it. My conclusion is that the charm of Japanese life is largely the charm of childhood, and that the most beautiful of all race childhoods is passing into an adolescence which threatens to prove repulsive. Perhaps the manhood may redeem all — as with English "bad boys" it often does.

I fear I can scarcely finish "Occult Japan," and that I praised it too much in my late letter, after hasty examination. It strikes me only as a mood of the man, an ugly, supercilious one, verging on the wickedness of a wish to hurt. When my eyes improve, I should like better to see his work on Mars. I don't wish to say that my work is as good as Lowell's "Soul of the Far East"; but it is a curious fact that in at least a majority of the favourable criticisms I have been spoken of as far more successful than Lowell. Why? Certainly not because I am his equal, either as a thinker or an observer. The reason is simply that the world considers the sympathetic mood more just than the analytical or critical. And except when the critic is a giant like Spencer or his peers — I fear the merely critical mood will always be blind to the most vital side of any human question. For the more vital side is feeling — not reason. This, indeed, Spencer showed long ago. But there was in the "Soul of the Far

East" an exquisite approach to playful tenderness — utterly banished from "Occult Japan."

Ever yours LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *February*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — Thanks for the curious historical envelopes. My eyes are nearly well: there is still one small black spot in the centre of the field of vision; but I trust it will go away as soon as the weather becomes warm.

I am delighted to know you like the book. A curious fact is that out of fifty criticisms sent me, in which the critics select "favourites," I find that almost every article in the book has been selected by somebody. It thus seems to appeal to persons of totally different temperament in different ways, and this fact suggests itself — that perhaps no book written entirely in one key can please so well as a book written in many keys. However, the work must be unconscious. If you are curious about any of the "inside facts," I shall be glad to tell you. The "Teacher's Diary" is, of course, strictly true as to means and facts; and the artistic work is simply one of "grouping." The cruiser at Mionoseki was the Takachiho — since become famous. Hino-misaki and Yaegaki ought to contain something you would like — so I trust you will peep at them some time. The Gūji of Hino-misaki is my wife's relative, and the story of his ancestor is quite true.

As for Japanese words, you might like "Out of the East" better. I don't think there are five Japanese words in the book. But it is chiefly reverie — contains little about facts or places. Perhaps you will be less pleased with it in another way.

As for changing my conclusions — well, I have had to change a good many. The tone of "Glimpses" is true in being the feeling of a place and time. Since then I've seen how thoroughly detestable Japanese can be, and that revelation assisted in illuminating things. I am now convinced, for example, that the deficiency of the sexual instinct (using the term philosophically) in the race is a serious defect rather than a merit, and is very probably connected with the absence of the musical sense and the incapacity for abstract reasoning. It does not follow, however, that the same instinct may not have been overdeveloped in our own case. To an Englishman, it would appear that such overdevelopment among Latin races would account for the artistic superiority as well as the moral weakness of French and Italians in special directions; — and the fact that even certain classes of music are now called sensual (not sensuous), and that there is a tendency to abjure Italian music in favour of the more aspirational German music — would seem to show that the largest-brained races are reaching a stage in abstract æsthetics still higher than the highest possible development of the æsthetics based on the sexual feeling. That the Japanese can ever reach our

æsthetic stage seems to me utterly impossible, but assuredly what they lack in certain directions they may prove splendidly capable of making up in others. Indeed the development of the mathematical faculty in the race — unchecked and unmollified by our class of æsthetics and idealisms — ought to prove a serious danger to Western civilization at last. At least it seems to me that here is a danger. Japan ought to produce scientific, political, and military haters of "ideologists" — Napoleons of practical applications of science. All that is tender and manly and considerate and heroic in Northern character has certainly grown out of the sexual sentiment: but the same class of feelings in the far East would seem to have been evolved out of a different class of emotional habits, and a class bound to disappear. Imagine a civilization on Western lines with cold calculation universally substituted for ethical principle! The suggestion is very terrible and very ugly. One would prefer even the society of the later Roman Empire.

I am sorry your eyes are not all you could wish. Do you not think it may be the weather? The doctor tells me my eyes will be all right in summer, but that I have to be careful in cold weather. And the tropics did me wonderful good. I want to get to the warm zones occasionally — perhaps shall be able to. There are some tropics bad for the eyes — lacking verdure. I have been unable to get facts about tropical conditions on this side of the world —

except through Wallace. Ceram suggests possibilities. But one must be well informed before going. Then there are the French Marquesas. A French colony ought to be full of romance, and void of missionaries. But all these are dreams.

Ever faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *March*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — It was very comforting to get a letter from you; for I wanted an impulse to write. I have been blue — by reason partly of the weather; and partly because of those reactions which follow all accomplished work in some men's cases. Everything done then seems like an Elle-woman — a mere delusive shell; and one marvels why anybody should have been charmed.

Of course I did not ask point-blank for criticisms, because you told me long ago, "Every man should make his own book" — and, although it is the literary custom in America to consult friends, I could see justice in the suggestion. The title "Out of the East" was selected from a number. It was suggested only by the motto of the Oriental Society, "Ex Oriente lux." The "Far East" has been so monopolized by others that I did not like to use the phrase. "Out of the Uttermost East" would sound cacophonously — besides suggesting a straining for effect. I thought of Tennyson's "most eastern east," but the

publishers did n't approve it. The simpler the title, and the vaguer — in my case — the better: the vagueness touches curiosity. Besides, the book is a vague thing. Sound has much to do with the value of a title. If it had n't, you would have written "Japanese Things" instead of "Things Japanese" — which is entirely different, and so pretty that your admirers and imitators snapped it up at once. So we have "Things Chinese" by an imitator, and "Things Japanese" is a phrase which has found its recognized place in the vocabulary of critics of both worlds. Your criticism on "Out of the East," though, would have strongly influenced me, if you had sent it early enough. I noticed the very same suggestion in the "Athenæum" regarding the use of the word "Orient" and the phrase "Far East" by Americans. For our "Orient" is, as you say, still the Orient of Kinglake, of De Nerval, etc. But why should it be? To Milton it was the Indian East with kings barbaric sitting under a rain of pearls and gold.

Manila was long my dream. But, although my capacity for sympathy with the beliefs of Catholic peasantry anywhere is very large — the ugly possibility exists that the Inquisition survives in Manila, and I have had the ill-fortune to make the Jesuits pay some attention to me. You know about the young Spaniard who had his property confiscated, and who disappeared some years ago — and was restored to liberty only after heaven and earth had

been moved by his friends in Spain. I don't know that I should disappear; but I should certainly have obstacles thrown in my way. Mexico would be a safer country for the same class of studies — Ceram ought to be interesting: in Wallace's time the cost of life per individual was only about 8*s.* 6*d.* a year! A moist, hot tropical climate I like best. The heat is weakening, I know, but that moisture means the verdure that is a delight to the eyes, and palms, and parrots, and butterflies of enormous size; — and no possibility of establishing Western conditions of life. I should like very much to see the book you kindly offered to lend me. It might create new aspirations: I am always at night dreaming of islands in undiscovered seas, where all the people are gods and fairies.

Of course I cannot know much about it now, but I am almost sure of having been in Malta as a child. At a later time my father, who was long there, told me queer things about the old palaces of the knights, and a story about a monk who, on the coming of the French, had the presence of mind to paint the gold chancel-railing with green paint. Southern Italy and the Mediterranean islands are especially fitted for classical scholars, like Symonds; but what a world of folk-lore also is there still ungathered! I should think that, next to Venice, Malta must be the most romantic spot in Europe.

I see your paper on Loochoo must have been much more than what you said of it — viz., that only some

snuffy German would read it. Or was the London report about the paper on Loochoo which I have? (There must be a wonderful ghost-world in those islands — though it would be quite hard to get at: probably three years' work.)

You can't imagine my feeling of reaction in the matter of Japanese psychology. It seems as if everything had quite suddenly become clear to me, and utterly void of emotional interest: a race primitive as the Etruscan before Rome was, or more so, adopting the practices of a larger civilization under compulsion — five thousand years at least emotionally behind us — yet able to suggest to us the existence of feelings and ideals which do not exist, but are simulated by something infinitely simpler. Wonder if our own highest things have not grown up out of equally simple things. The compulsion first — then the sense of duty become habit, automatic, the conviction expanding into knowledge of ethical habit — then the habit creating conviction — then relations — then the capacity for general ideas. But all the educational system now seems to me farcical and wrong — except in mere dealing with facts apparent to common sense. There are no depths to stir, no race-profundities to explore: all is like a Japanese river-bed, through which the stones and rocks show up all the year round — and is never filled but in time of cataclysm and destruction.

Ever faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *March*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — Of course send back the Taylor and Pater — if you don't care for them. I myself was very much disappointed in Pater. Perhaps my liking for Taylor is connected with boyish recollections of his facile charm: even Longfellow cannot greatly thrill me now. And may I make a confession? — I can't endure any more of Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley — having learned the gems of them by heart. I really prefer Dobson and Watson and Lang. Of Wordsworth Watson sings —

> It may be thought has broadened since he died!

Well, I should smile! His deepest truths have become platitudes.

This reminds me that I have wanted to talk to you about a magical bit of Hugo's, "Chant de Sophocle à Salamine." It is such a striking instance of Hugo's greatness and littleness. You know it, I suppose. It opens thus:

> Me voilà! Je suis un Ephèbe, —
> Mes seize ans sont d'azur baignés,
> Guerre, Déesse de l'Erèbe, —
> Sombre Guerre *aux cris indignes.*

The italicized words make me mad. It is a bathos, the fourth line — shrieking bathos; while the first part of the verse is like a Greek frieze. But let us go on:

Je viens à toi, la nuit est noire!
Puisque Xercès est le plus fort,
Prends-moi pour la lutte et la gloire,
Et pour la tombe — mais d'abord, —

(Now for the magnificence!)

Toi dont le glaive est le ministre,
Toi que l'Eclair suit dans les cieux,
Choisis-moi de ta main sinistre
Une belle fille aux doux yeux.

What makes the splendour of this verse? Not only the tremendous contrast — apocalyptic. It is especially, I think, the magnificent dual use of "sinistre." How Hugoish the whole thing is! . . .

I fear that what I said long ago is likely to come true: the first fire is burnt out — the zeal is dead — the educational effort (one of the most colossal in all history, surely) having served its immediate purpose (the recovery of national autonomy) is dead. Hence there is a prospect of decay.

Now I should like to protest against this danger in a review-article: say, "History of the Decline and Fall of Education in Japan"; or, "History of Foreign Teaching in Japan." Could I get documents? — just a skeleton at least, of statistics, rules, details, numbers. The article has been in my mind for two years. And I notice the Japanese don't object to healthy criticisms at all — rather like them They hate petting-talk, however — and stupid misinterpretations. I should like to try the thing.

I think it is Amenomori who is writing rather savage things in the "Chronicle" just now, about the

Mombushō, and threatens to write more. There is a something unpleasant in the tone of Japanese satire to me — however clever, it shows that they have not yet reached the same perception of sensibility as we have. Of course I refer only to the best of them — masters. The sympathetic touch is always absent. I feel unhappy at being in the company of a cultivated Japanese for more than an hour at a time. After the first charm of formality is over, the man becomes ice — or else suddenly drifts away from you into his own world, far from ours as the star Rephan.

You will be pleased to hear that I have not yet dropped money. I have made nothing to speak of, but have lost none so far. By fall I suppose I shall have made something, though no fortune, out of "Glimpses." If I can clear enough to justify a tropical trip, I shall be satisfied.

Malta must be delightful. But I am not enough of a scholar to use such an opportunity as Malta would give. I should do better with Spain and gipsies, or Pondicherry and Klings.

By the way, my child-tongue was Italian. I spoke Romaic and Italian by turns. In New Orleans I hired a teacher to teach me — thinking memory would come back again. But it did n't come at all, and I quarrelled with the teacher, who looked exactly like a murderer and never smiled. So I know not Italian.

Ever faithfully LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

Kōbe, *March*, 1895

MBERLAIN, — About three days ago came
e books. "The Cruise of the Marchesa"
.. would be difficult to praise too highly. There are a few touches here and there slightly priggish, or snobbish — but the fine taste of the writer as a rule, his modesty as a man of science, his compact force of expression, his appreciation of nature, his astonishing capacity for saying a vast deal in a few words, are indubitable, and give the book a very high literary place. The engravings are lovely. The other book is an amazement. How any man could seriously make such a book I can't possibly imagine. It is the most disgraceful attempt of the sort I ever saw — absolutely unreadable as a whole: an almanac is a romance by comparison. Still I found a lot of interesting facts by groping through it. I should scarcely like to trust myself in Manila.

The Marchesa book is a delight, and will bear many readings. The general impression is that both Sulu and the Celebes are paradises; but that Dutch order is highly preferable to the condition of the isles under Spanish domination (in theory). The necessity of dress-coats and de rigueur habits is the chief drawback, I should imagine, at a place like Macassar. But the Malayan Dutch colonies must be delightful places. I fear, however, that as in Java, the Chris-

tianization of the natives has spoiled the field for folk-lore work.

The Ryūkyū chapters, with the illumination of your own pamphlet, make a very pleasant, dreamy, gentle sensation. Half-China and half-Japan under tropical conditions should create a particular queerness quite different from our Dai Nippon queerness. I hardly believe that the conditions will change so rapidly as those of Japan proper. In such latitudes and such isolation changes do not come quickly. There are little places on the west coast I know of where the conditions must be still pretty near the same as they were a thousand years ago.

I fear, however, my travelling days (except for business and monotonous work) are nearly over. I'm not going to get rich. Some day I may hit the public; but that will probably be when I shall have become ancient. I feel just now empty and useless and a dead failure. Perhaps I shall feel better next season. At all events I have learned that, beyond all doubt and question, it is absolutely useless for me to try to "force work." If the feeling does not come of itself from outside, one had better do nothing.

I had a sensation the other day, though, which I want to talk to you about. I felt as if I hated Japan unspeakably, and the whole world seemed not worth living in, when there came two women to the house, to sell ballads. One took her samisen and sang; and people crowded into the tiny yard to hear. Never did I listen to anything sweeter. All the sorrow and

beauty, all the pain and the sweetness of life thrilled and quivered in that voice; and the old first love of Japan and of things Japanese came back, and a great tenderness seemed to fill the place like a haunting. I looked at the people, and I saw they were nearly all weeping, and snuffing; and though I could not understand the words, I could feel the pathos and the beauty of things. Then, too, for the first time, I noticed that the singer was blind. Both women were almost surprisingly ugly, but the voice of the one that sang was indescribably beautiful; and she sang as peasants and birds and semi sing, which is nature and is divine. They were wanderers both. I called them in, and treated them well, and heard their story. It was not romantic at all — small-pox, blindness, a sick husband (paralyzed) and children to care for. I got two copies of the ballad, and enclose one. I should be very glad to pay for having it translated literally: — if you think it could be used, I wish you would some day, when opportunity offers, give it to a Japanese translator. As for price, I should say five yen would be a fair limit.

Would you not like me to return some day your version of the Kumamoto Rōjō, and admirable translation? I preserve it carefully; and have used some of the lines for a sketch in the forthcoming book. I rendered nearly the whole into loose verse, but in spite of my utmost efforts, I could do nothing with the best part of it; I could put no spirit into the lines. My suggestion about it is because it is a very

curious if not a very poetical thing; and should you ever make an essay upon modern Japanese military songs, it would be a pity not to include it. So it is always carefully kept, not only for its own sake, but also in view of such possible use.

I find it is still the custom when a shinjū occurs to make a ballad about it, and sing the same, and sell it. This reminds one of London. Ballad customs seem to be the same in all parts of the world.

I shall soon return the books, with a copy of the next "Atlantic." What could I send you that you would like? I should suggest Rossetti, if you do not know him well — for I think he ranks as high as Tennyson. I have only Wallace among travellers. I have all of Fiske and Huxley and Spencer and Clifford and the philosophy of Lewes. By the way, have you read "Trilby"? I have read it several times over. It is a wonderful book. The art of it escapes one at first reading, when one reads only for the story.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — I warned you not to get Gautier's complete works — so you have been disappointed against my desire. Gautier's own opinion was adverse to the publication of his complete poems in this shape. He selected and published separately those which satisfied him, in the "Emaux et

Camées." (I once translated "Les Taches Jaunes" — is n't it? — in the other volume; a bit of weird sensualism quite in the Romantic spirit.) Gautier's work is often uneven. He was a journalist, and lived by the newspaper. His life's complaint was that he could never find time for perfect work: the effort merely to live finally worried him to death during the siege, I think. Still, writing merely for a newspaper — in haste — without a chance to think and polish — his feuilletons remain treasures of French literature. (You are very unjust to his prose; for it is the finest of all French prose.) His complete works are worth having — they run to about sixty volumes but they cannot all be had from one publisher. So he has become a subject for book-collectors. Sainte-Beuve, like Gautier, existed as a journalist. In France a journalist used to have literary chances. In English-speaking countries literary work is still outside of the newspapers; and our would-be littérateurs have therefore a still harder struggle. (See that article in the "Revue." No English prose could accomplish those feats of colour and sensation — delicate sensation the most difficult to produce. English as an artistic tongue is immeasurably inferior to French.)

"Philip and His Wife" was finished in the October number. I know I sent all the numbers containing it. Mrs. Deland is a great genius, I think. Her "Story of a Child" was one of the daintiest bits of psychology I ever read.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

Sorry you deny hereditary sensation. The idea of the experimentalists that the mind of the newly born child is a tabula rasa, and that all sensations are based on individual experiences, is no longer recognized — not at least by the evolutional school of psychology, the only purely scientific school. Spencer especially has denied this idea. In the life about us we see every day proofs of inherited capacity for pleasures we know nothing of, and incapacity for pleasures normal to us and to our whole race. Indeed, I can prove the fact to you at any time. . . .

Faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. I have been out for a walk. As usual the little boys cried "Ijin," "Tōjin" — and, although I don't go out alone, the changed feeling of even the adult population toward a foreigner wandering through their streets was strongly visible.

A sadness, such as I never felt before in Japan, came over me. Perhaps your pencilled comments on the decrease of filial piety, and the erroneous impressions of national character in "Glimpses," had something to do with it. I felt, as never before, how utterly dead Old Japan is, and how ugly New Japan is becoming. I thought how useless to write about things which have ceased to exist. Only on reaching a little shrine, filled with popular ex-voto — innocent foolish things — it seemed to me something

of the old heart was beating still — but far away from me, and out of reach. And I thought I would like to be in the old Buddhist cemetery at Gesshōji, which is in Matsue, in the Land of Izumo — the dead are so much better off than the living, and were so much greater.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *March*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — You will scarcely be able to believe me, I imagine; but I must confess that your letter on "shall" and "will" is a sort of revelation in one sense — it convinces me that some people, and I suppose all people of fine English culture, really feel a sharp distinction of meaning in the sight and sound of the words "will" and "shall." I confess, also, that I never have felt such a distinction, and cannot feel it now. I have been guided chiefly by euphony, and the sensation of "will" as softer and gentler than "shall." The word "shall" in the second person especially has for me a queer identification with English harshness and menace — memories of school, perhaps. I shall study the differences by your teaching, and try to avoid mistakes, but I think I shall never be able to feel the distinction. The tone to me is everything — the word nothing. For example, the Western cowboy says "Yes, you will, Mister," in a tone that means something much more terrible than the angry educated Englishman's "you shall." I know this

confession is horrid — but there 's the truth of the matter; and I feel angry with conventional forms of language of which I cannot understand the real spirit. I trust the tendency to substitute "will" for "shall" which you have noticed, and which I have always felt, is going eventually to render the use of "shall" with the first person obsolete. I am "colour blind" to the values you assert; and I suspect that the majority of the English-speaking races — the raw people — are also blind thereunto. It is the people, after all, who make the language in the end, and in the direction of least resistance.

You did not quite catch my meaning on the subject of inherited feeling. I did not hint you denied heredity (though your last letter embodies several strong denials of it, I think). I believe it is an accepted general rule, for example, that only a child having parents of different races can learn even two languages equally well: in other cases, one language gains at the expense of the other. Creoles exemplify this rule. Toys are related to the æsthetic faculty, to the play-impulse, to the imaginative capacity. These differ really in different races; and represent, not individual education at all, but the sum of racial experiences under certain conditions. I cannot believe for a moment that an English child born in Japan could feel the same sensation on looking at a Japanese picture as the sensation felt by a Japanese child when looking at the same picture. (With food, the matter is different: English children in many

cases disliking greasy cooking, and in other cases showing a decided preference for fat. Only a very large number of instances — many thousand — could really show any general rule in the case of English children born in Japan. The evidence you cite seems to me a contradiction, or exception to general tendencies.) The psychical fact about feelings and emotions is that they are inheritances, just as much as the colour of hair, or the size of limbs; and tastes — such as a taste for music or painting — are similarly inherited. They are outside of the individual experience as much as a birth-mark. To explain fully why, would involve a lot of neurological scribbling — but it is sufficient to say that as all feelings are the result of motions in nervous structure, the volume and character and kind of feeling is predetermined in each individual by the character of nerve-tissue and its arrangement and complexity. In no two individuals are the nervous structures exactly the same; and the differences in races or individuals are consequent upon the differences in quality, variety, and volume of ancestral experience shaping each life.

"The experience-hypothesis," says Spencer, "is inadequate to account for emotional phenomena. It is even more at fault in respect to the emotions than in respect to the cognitions. The doctrine that all the desires, all the sentiments, are generated by the experiences of the individual, is so glaringly at variance with facts that I wonder how any one

should ever have entertained it." And he cites "the multiform passions of the infant, displayed before there has been any such amount of experience as could possibly account for them."

In short, there is no possible room for argument as to whether each particular character — with all its possibilities, intellectual or emotional — is not predetermined by the character of nervous structure, slowly evolved by millions of billions of experiences in the past. As the differences in the ancestral sums of experiences, so the differences in the psychical life. Varying enormously in races so widely removed as English and Japanese, it is impossible to believe that any feeling in one race is exactly paralleled by any feeling in the other. It is equally impossible to think that the feelings of a Japanese child can be the same as those of an English child born in Japan. Amazing physical proof to the contrary would be afforded by a comparative study of the two nervous structures.

To say, therefore, that the sight of a toy — adjusted exactly by the experience of the race to the experience of the individual — produces on the mind of a Japanese child the same impression it would produce on the mind of an English child born in Japan and brought up by Japanese only, would be to deny all our modern knowledge of biology, psychology, and even physiology. The pleasure of the Japanese child in its toy is the pleasure of the dead.

Ever faithfully LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *April*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — "The law of heredity is unlimited in its application" (Spencer, "Biology," Vol. I, chapter "Heredity"). "Some naturalists seem to entertain a vague belief [like yours?] that the law of heredity applies only to main characters of structure, and not to details; or that though it applies to such details as constitute differences of species, it does not apply to smaller details. The circumstance that the tendency to repetition is in a slight degree qualified by the tendency to variation (which . . . is but an indirect result of the tendency to repetition) leads some to doubt whether heredity is unlimited. A careful weighing of the evidence . . . will remove the ground for this skepticism." ("Biology," Vol. I, p. 239.)

Your statement that the "weak person will always remain weak," but that "the manifestations of his weakness will surely depend on the nature of the obstacles in his way," is a proof that you do not perceive the full reach of the explanation. The manifestations of weakness may be evoked by obstacles, but the nature of those manifestations cannot possibly have anything in common with the nature of the obstacles. The weakness being hereditary, the nature of the obstacle cannot change it.

The case of the Northern nations seems to me direct proof of the contrary to what you suggest.

Olaf Trygvesson and others never really changed the national religion, except in name — no such rapid change would have been possible. The worship of Odin and Thor continued under the name of Christ and the Saints — and still continues to some extent to influence English life. The shaking-off of ecclesiastical power at a later day — the protestantizing of the Northern races — is certainly the manifestation in history of the same fierce love of freedom that founded the Icelandic Republic. So with English limitation of monarchical power, the history of the constitution, etc. So with the superiority of English and Norse seamanship to-day — Vikings still command our fleet. The changes you cite as evidence of the non-influence of heredity really prove it: they are, moreover, mere surface-shiftings of colour, and do not reach down into the national life. Variations are the result of heredity, not the exceptions to it. The explanation of this fact would necessitate, however, a long discussion on the deepening or weakening of those channels of nerve-force which are the river-courses of life and thought. Similarly, growth — of brain and thought as well as of body — is the consequence, not the contradiction, of inheritance. So with instinct — which is organized memory — and with genius, which represents accumulations of capacity (often at the expense of other growths).

I fear you think of Galton only when you limit the word heredity. Universal life and growth is touched

by the larger meaning: Galton's wonderful books represent merely a domestic paragraph of the subject. The underlying principles of evolution — the deep laws of physiological growth and development — involve far vaster and profounder consideration of the subject. Inheritance is no "fad": it means you and me and the world and our central sun.

My text was plain — but you have forgotten it. I spoke of "ancestral pleasure," "hereditary delight." You deny their possibility. The toys are not ancestral, of course, nor did I say they were — but they appealed to ancestral feeling. Why? All pleasure is hereditary — every feeling is inherited. Why, then, say so? Because in this case we are considering race-feelings widely differentiated from our own.

But all this is surface — the ghostly side of the question is the beautiful one, and one which you would not deny without examining the evidence? Perhaps you think that the first time you saw Fuji or Miyanoshita, you had really a new sensation. But you had nothing of the kind. The sensations of that new experience in your own life were millions of years old! Far from simple is the commonest of our pleasures, but a layer, infinitely multiple, of myriads of millions of ancestral impressions. Try to analyze the sensation of pleasure in a sunrise, or the smell of hay, and how soon we are lost. We can only classify the elements of such a pleasure "by bundles," so to speak.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

It might at first sight shock a strong soul to perceive itself not individual and original, but an infinite compound. But I think one's pride in one's good should subsequently expand. The thought that one's strength is the strength of one's ancestors — of a host innumerable and ancient as the race — has its larger consolation. And here is the poetry of the thing. You are my friend B. H. C. But you are much more — you are also Captain B. H., and a host of others — doubtless Viking and Norman and Danish — a procession reaching back into the weird twilight of the Northern gods.

So much for the fun of our discussion. I won't send the long screed: it is too full of dry stuff, and on reading it over I find that my enthusiasm betrayed me into several wild misstatements.

I am sorry about your cold, and I can sympathize; for I also have been ill, and my boy, and I find spring very trying. I am all right to-day, and so are we all.

Wish I were nineteen years old, and, like Ben, going to sea. As a boy, I cried and made a great fuss because they told me, "You can't go to sea: you are too near-sighted." Perhaps I was saved from disillusions.

You know Frederick Soulié's "Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait." There was an unconscious recognition of heredity — before modern biology had been synthetized.

Ever with best wishes and regards

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *April*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — On re-reading your letter I find it necessary to assure you positively (pardon me if I am rude) that you have no conception whatever, not the least, of the scientific opinions as to psychological evolution held by Spencer. It is necessary I should say this — otherwise the mere discussion of details would leave you under the impression that I recognize your understanding of the subject. It is quite obvious that you do not understand evolution at all. You do understand natural selection — but that is quite another matter.

To comprehend psychological evolution, it is first necessary to banish absolutely from the mind every speck of belief that the individual can be changed in character, or intrinsically added to, by any influence whatever, to any perceptible degree. There may be modifications or increments, just as there may be decrements, but these remain imperceptible. The race is visibly modified in the course of centuries — not the individual, whether by education, environment or anything else. The millions of years required for the development of a body are much more required for the development of a mind. Could the individual be really changed to the degree imagined by the soul-theory, a few generations would suffice to form a perfectly evolved race.

Education and other influences only develop or

stimulate the preëxisting. There is an unfolding (possibly also a very slight increment of neural structure), but the unfolding is of that formed before birth. There are no changes such as seriously affect character. The evolution of the race is perceptible — not that of the individual, except as the individual life is that of the race in epitome.

Besides emotions, passions, etc., certain ideas are necessarily inherited. Otherwise mental development in the individual even could not take place. Such is the idea of Space, and other ideas which form the canvas and stage of thought. Simple as they seem, they are complicated enough to have required millions of years to form.

Evolution includes not merely the shaping and modification of existing matter, but the development of visible matter itself out of the invisible. The evidence of chemistry is that all substances we call elements have been evolved by tendencies out of something infinitely simpler and massless.

LAFCADIO HEARN

Precisely for the same reason that the majority of men in all countries live more by feeling than by reason, and that the emotions, which are inheritances, play a greater part in the individual life than the reasoning faculties, which need training and experience for their development and use — so is the study of heredity of larger importance in the study of emotional life. And therefore your sug-

gestion that one factor should not be dwelt on rather than others would be bad to follow — first, because all are not equal either in importance or interest, and secondly because the circumstance related or studied must be considered especially in relation to the principal factor of the psychological state which that circumstance has evoked.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *April*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — The factors of evolution are multitudinous beyond enumeration, and no one with a ghost of knowledge of the modern scientific researches on the subject could hold (as you suggest I do) that heredity is a first cause and "exclusive" (!) Heredity is a result, and the vehicle of transmission, as well as the "Karma" (which Huxley calls it). Degeneration, atrophy, atavism, are quite as much factors in evolution as variation and natural selection and development; — but the flowing of the eternal stream, the river of life, is heredity — whatever form the ripples take. As I have given some twenty years' study to these subjects, I am not likely to overlook any such thing as environment or climate or diet. You cannot, however, get a grasp of the system by reading only a digest of results — a study of biology and physiology is absolutely necessary before the psychology of the thing can be clearly perceived. Now you say you will accept anything Spencer writes on the subject. Well, he

writes that "a child" playing with its "toys" experiences "presentative-representative feelings." What are presentative-representative feelings? They are feelings chiefly "deeper than individual experience." What are feelings deeper than individual experience? Mr. Spencer tells us they are "inherited feelings" — the sum of ancestral experiences — the aggregates of race-experience. Therefore when I said the child's delight in its toys was "hereditary-ancestral," I said precisely what Spencer says, but what you would never acknowledge so long as "only I" said it.

On this subject of emotions inherited as distinguished from others, and from those changes in states of consciousness generally which we call reasoning or constructive imagination, the definite utterances of Spencer as physiologist are electrically reënforced by the startling theory of Schopenhauer, by the system of Hartmann, and by the views of Janet and his rapidly growing school. Indeed, the mere fact that a child cries at the sight of a frowning face and laughs at a smiling one could be explained in no other manner.

You are not quite correct in saying that Spencer could not obtain a hearing before Darwin. Before Darwin, Spencer had already been recognized by Lewes as the mightiest of all English thinkers, with the remarkable observation that he was too large and near to be justly estimated even in his lifetime. Darwin did much, of course, to illuminate one factor

of evolution; but I need hardly say that one factor, though the most commonly identified with evolution, is but one of myriads. Natural selection can explain but a very small part of the thing. The colossal brain which first detected the necessity of evolution as a cosmic law — governing the growth of a solar system as well as the growth of a gnat — the brain of Spencer, discerned that law by pure mathematical study of the laws of force. And the work of the Darwins and Huxleys and Tyndalls is but detail — small detail — in that tremendous system which has abolished all preëxisting philosophy and transformed all science and education.

I need scarcely say, however, that I should not be able, as a literary dreamer, to derive the inspiration needed from Spencer alone: he is best illuminated, I think, by the aid of Schopenhauer and the new French school which considers the so-called individual as really an infinite multiple. These men have said nothing of value which Spencer has not said much better scientifically — but they are infinitely suggestive when they happen to coincide with him. So, after a fashion, is the Vedantic philosophy (much more so than Buddhism), and so also some few dreams of the old Greek schools.

Your criticisms also show that you take me as confusing changes of relation of integrated states of consciousness with inherited integrations of emotional feeling. These are absolutely distinct. But don't think that I pretend to be invariably a state

of facts: without theory, a very large part of life's poetry could never be adequately uttered.

I knew that the music of the "Kimi ga yo" was new — though I did not know the story of the German bandmaster. But I did not know that the words once had no reference to the Emperor. I was more careful, however, than you give me credit for — since I wrote only "the syllables made sacred by the reverential love of a century of generations," which, allowing for poetical exaggeration, seems to be all right anyhow, even if the words did not refer to the Emperor. Of course the implication to the foreign reader would, however, be wrong.

Still, on the subject of loyalty, I cannot see that the existence of the feeling as inborn is invalidated by the fact of transference. The feeling is the thing — not the object, not the Emperor nor the daimyō — which, I imagine, must have survived all the changes. Trained from the time of the gods to obedience and loyalty to somebody, the feeling of the military classes would not have been instantly dissipated or annihilated by the change of government, but simply transferred. Indeed, that strikes me as having been what the Government worked for. It could not afford to ignore or throw away so enormous a source of power as the inherited feeling of the race offered, and attempted (I think very successfully) to transfer it to the Emperor. The fact in no way affects the truth or falsehood of the sketch "Yūho."

Your criticism is only a re-denial of inherited feeling as a possibility.

Ever very truly

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

April, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — Excuse me if I don't reply more fully to your letter, because my eyes are a little tired. I can only say I wish I were sick, somewhere near you: then perhaps you would come and see me, and talk more of these queer things. You would not find the time heavy. For the subject is a romance.

In order to convey by a diagram any picture-idea of what heredity means, one should have to draw a series of inverted cone-figures representing a reticulation of millions of cross-lines. This could only be done well under a microscope, and on a very limited scale. Because the thing goes by arithmetical progression. The individual is the product of two, the two of four, the four of eight, the eight of sixteen — well, you know the tale of the smith who offered to shoe a horse with thirty-two nails, to receive one cent on the first nail, and to double the sum upon every nail! The enormity of inheritance is at once apparent. But to produce another individual, another life is needed, which represents the superimposition in the child of another infinitely complex inheritance. The fact is only worth stating as

suggesting that under normal circumstances the child would necessarily represent an increment. He should receive not only the experience of his father's race, but all that of his mother's race superimposed upon it. The fact that he does very nearly do so is evidenced by the reappearance in his descendants of parental traits always invisible in himself. Mere multiplication ought therefore to account for a larger mental growth and progress than exists or could ever exist.

Why does n't it? Simply because in the brain the same selective process goes on as in the vegetable world. As out of ten million seeds scarcely one survives: so out of a million mental impressions scarcely one survives. Indeed, not so many. For the inheritance is of repetitions — rarely of single impressions. It is only when an impression has been repeated times innumerable that it becomes transmissible — that it affects the cerebral structure so as to become organic memory. The inheritance is of a very compound nature, therefore — requiring either enormous time for development, or enormous experience. There is reason to believe, however, that in the case of very highly organized brains — such as those of the modern musician, linguist, or mathematician — the multiple experiences of even one lifetime may produce structural modifications capable of transmission. This is not the case except in men as much larger than common men as Fuji is larger than an ant-hill. And the reason is that such a brain can

daily receive billions of impressions that common minds cannot receive in a whole lifetime. The thinking is of the constructive character — the most highly complex form possible; and the extreme sensitiveness of the structures renders habitual conceptions which represent combinations of conscious states never entered into before. Measured by mere difference of force, the brain of the mathematician is to the brain of the ordinary man as the most powerful dynamo to the muscles of an ant.

Happily for mankind, not only is inheritance something more than repetition, it is also something less than repetition. Between these two extremes of plus and minus the physiology of mental activities in any lifetime represents a fierce struggle for the survival of the best or worst. Here is where the environment comes in — determining which of a million tendencies shall have freest play or least play. According to circumstances the impulses of the dead are used or neglected. The more used, the more powerful their active potentialities, and the more apt to increase by transmission. But their vitality is racial — measurable only by millions of years. They may lie dormant for twenty centuries. and be suddenly called into being again — sinister and monstrous-seeming, because no longer in harmony with the age. (Here is the point of the selective process.)

Here comes in the consideration of a very terrible possibility. Suppose we use integers instead of

quintillions or centillions, and say that an individual represents by inheritance a total of 10 — 5 of impulses favourable to social life, 5 of the reverse. (Such a balance would really occur in many cases.) The child inherits, under favourable conditions, the father's balance plus the maternal balance of 9 — four of the number being favourable. We have then a total which becomes odd, and the single odd number gives preponderance to an accumulation of ancestral impulse incalculable for evil. It would be like a pair of scales, each holding a mass as large as Fuji. If the balance were absolutely perfect, the weight of one hair would be enough to move a mass of millions of tons. Here is your antique Nemesis awfully magnified. Let the individual descend below a certain level, and countless dead suddenly seize and destroy him — like the Furies.

In all cases, however, except those of the very highest forms of mental activity, the psychological life consists of repetitions — not of originalities. And environment, chance, etc., simply influence the extent and volume of the repetitions. In the case of constructive imagination, on the other hand, there are totally new combinations made independently of environment or circumstances: there is almost creation, and in certain cases absolute faculty of prediction. Instance the case of the mathematician who, without having ever seen the Iceland Spar, but knowing its qualities, said: "Cut it at such an angle, and you will see a coloured circle."

They cut it, and the circle was seen for the first time by human eyes.

Properly, however, there is no such thing as an individual, but only a combination — one balance of an infinite sum. The charm of a very superior man or woman is the ghostliest of all conceivable experiences. For the man or woman in question can in a single evening become fifty, a hundred, two hundred different people — not in fancy, but in actual fact. Here the character of the ancestral experience has been so high and rare that a different part of the race's mental life is instantly resurrected at will to welcome and charm, or to master and repel, the various sorts of character encountered, haphazard, in the salon of the aristocratic milieu.

It would be natural to ask: If the emotions and passions are inheritances, why are not these higher faculties inherited en masse as well? Because feeling is infinitely older than thinking, developed millions of years before thinking. Also because the reasoning powers have been grown out of the feelings — as trees from soil. Those forms of consciousness most connected with the animal life of the race are, of course, the first to develop, and the first to become transmissible. But the time may come when higher faculties will be also similarly transmissible.

Taking the highest possible form of human thought — a mathematical concept — and analyzing it, we find a whole volume is required for the mere statement of the analysis. The flash of the

thought took less than a second; to write all the thinking it involved requires years. We take it to pieces by bundles of concepts and bundles of experiences — which are changes in relations of compound states of consciousness. The relations of those states of consciousness are resolvable into simpler ones, and those into simpler, and at last we come down to mere perceptions, and the perceptions are separated into ideas, and the ideas into compound sensations, and the compound sensations into sensations simple as those of the amœba, or the humblest protozoa.

Thus we can also trace up the history of any thought from the state of mere animalcular sensation. The highest thought is resolvable into infinite compounds of such sensations. Beyond that we cannot go. The Universe may be sentient, but we don't know it. All we know is sensation and combinations of sensations in the brain. The highest spiritual sentiment is based upon the lowest animal sensations. But what is sensation? No one can tell. On this subject very awful discoveries are perhaps awaiting us.

Now heredity is the most wonderful thing of all things, because it is utterly incomprehensible.

A mathematical calculation has established beyond all question the fact that the number of ultimate units in a sperm-cell and germ-cell combined is totally insufficient to account for the number of impressions and tendencies transmitted — supposing

a change in the ultimate units possible. Therefore in order to have a working theory, we are obliged to use the term "polarity" — which only means physical tendency to relationships. But the mystery of the transmission of the impulse remains just as far away as ever.

Of course I can't agree with you as to the statement of culture from outside, except in the poetical sense. Scientifically the culture movement is internal — the responses of innumerable dead to exterior influence — the weirdest resurrections of buried faculties.

As for evolution being caused by outer influences, I think the idea leads to misconception of an intelligent power working and watching things. We have no need of such a theory. Pain is the chief mental factor. The elements of life are remarkable in being chemically unstable — astonishingly unstable, and the mere working of the universal forces on such elements quite sufficiently accounts for all changes. But the fact that there is no line between life and not-life, no line between the animal and vegetable world, no line between the visible and invisible, no assurance that matter has any existence in itself — that is a very awful truth. It is otherwise incorrect to think of evolution being caused by outer influences, because the inner forces are the really direct ones — answering to the outer. Moreover, the thing evolved, and the power evolving, and the forces internal and external — the visible and the

non-visible — are (so far as human reason permits us to judge) all one and the same. We know only phenomena; and modern thought recognizes more and more the Indian thought that the Supreme Brahma is only playing a chess game with himself. Absolutely we know only forces — pure ghostliness. The individual substance is but a force combination — its changes are force combinations — the powers outside are but force combinations — the universe is a force combination — and we can know nothing more than vibrations.

Ever

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. I forgot to notice your statement — "not through the physical fact of nerve-tissue," etc.

All thinking — all, without exception — is alteration of nerve-substance; either temporary motion or motion making by countless repetition alterations that are permanent. Physiologically, "thought" is a very complex vibration in nerve-tissue. There is no other meaning whatever in science for "thought." For "thought" is a perception of relations in pre-existing states of consciousness, and those are bundles of sensations. What "sensation" is, no man knows. That is the dark spot in the retina of consciousness. But there is no proof that sensation exists apart from cell-substance.

To speak of an "ideal process" outside of vibration in nervous substance is therefore like saying

that 5 times 5 = 918. It is a total denial of all science on the subject. An idea is a bundle of sensations, and a sensation is coincident with a movement in cerebral cells. Without the movement there is no sensation — not at least in the brain. We do not know the ultimate of sensation, but thoughts and ideas only mean complex combinations of sensations impossible outside of nerve-substance so far as we know.

Of course if you mean by culture from outside the transmission of civilization from one race to another — then there has been enormous alteration of cerebral structure. Such alteration is even now going on in Japan, and causes yearly hundreds of deaths.

The brain of the civilized man is thirty per cent heavier than that of the savage; and the brain of the nineteenth century much larger than that of the sixteenth (see Broca). A striking fact of evolution is brain-growth. The early mammals were remarkable for the smallness of their brains. Man's nervous structure is, of course, the most powerful of all. Cut out of the body, it is found to weigh, as a total, double that of a horse. For mind signifies motion, force — the more powerful the mind the greater the forces evolved. Perhaps the nervous system of a whale might weigh more than that of a man as a total mass, but not nearly so much in parts corresponding with mental differences. Nevertheless the changes effected by progress in the brain are

chiefly visible in the direction of increasing complexity rather than in bulk. The study of braincasts promises to develop some interesting facts.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *April*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — In one of your recent letters, which charmed me by its kindness — though I did not dwell on the pleasure given me, because I was so immediately occupied in discussing my psychical hobby — you asked me: "How could I expect to hit the public more than I have done?"

Well, not with a book on Japan, perhaps; but I must do better some day with something, or acknowledge myself a dead failure. I really think I have stored away in me somewhere powers larger than those I have yet been able to use. Of course I don't mean that I have any hidden wisdom, or anything of that sort; but I believe I have some power to reach the public emotionally, if conditions allow.

One little story which would never die, might suffice — or a volume of little stories. Stories, fiction: that is all the public care about. Not essays, however clever — nor vagaries, nor travels — but stories about something common to all life under the sun. And this is just the very hardest of all earthly things to do. I might write an essay on some topic of which I am now quite ignorant — by studying the subject for the necessary time. But a story cannot be written by the help of study at all:

it must come from outside. It must be a "sensation" in one's own life — and not peculiar to any life or any place or time.

I have been studying the "will" and "shall" carefully, and think that I shall be able to avoid serious mistakes hereafter. It is difficult, however, for me to get the "instantaneous sense" — so to speak — of their correct use. The line between "intention" and "future sequence" I can't well define.

I can't help fearing that what you mean by "justice and temperateness" in writing means that you want me to write as if I were you, or at least to measure sentence or thought by your standard. This, of course, would render frank correspondence impossible — as it does even now to some extent. If I write well of a thing one day, and badly another — I expect my friend to discern that both impressions are true, and solve the contradiction — that is, if my letters are really wanted. For absolute "justice and temperateness," one can find them in the pages of Herbert Spencer — but you would then discern that even la raison peut fatiguer à la longue. I should suppose the interest of letters not to be in the text, but in the writer. Am I wrong?

L. H.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *April*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — In writing to you, of course, I've not been writing a book — but simply set-

A Sleeping-Room in Hearn's House, Tōkyō

ting down the thoughts and feelings of the moment as they come. I write a book exactly the same way; but all this has to be smoothed, ordinated, corrected, toned over twenty times before a page is ready. It strikes me, however, that the first raw emotion or fancy, which is the base of all, has its value between men who understand each other. You, on the other hand — differently constituted — write a letter as you would write a book. You collect and mould the thought instinctively and perhaps unconsciously before setting it on paper.

I'm not quite such an American radical as you think in consequence; for I confess to a belief in the value of aristocracies — a very strong belief. On the other hand, the reality of the thing to the man is its relation to him personally. Don't you think your comfort in all sorts and conditions may be due to your personal independence of those sorts and conditions? It is like Rufz's statement that "the first relations between men are delicious" — so long as you are in nobody's way, and have capacity to please, you have the bright side turned to you. (Again, there is this question: Are you sure the side you see and like is not the artificial side? I don't say it is, but there are possibilities.)

My own dislike of mercantile people in all countries is based upon experiences of the contrary sort. But how can men, trained from childhood to watch for and to take all possible advantage of human weakness, remain a morally superior class.

That they don't, needs no argument; and that the poorest people in all countries are the most moral and self-sacrificing needs no argument either. Both are acknowledged and indisputable facts in sociology — in the study of civilized races, at least. When to this marrow-bred sense of morality is superadded the courtesy you yourself in a former letter declared without parallel, I see nothing extravagant in the statement that a Japanese hyakushō is more of a gentleman than an English merchant can be — if gentleness means delicate consideration for others, by means of which virtue no man can succeed in life.

I should like to know any story of heroism — sorry not to be near you to coax you for an outline of it. Every fact of goodness makes one better, and an author richer, to know it. There are good heroes and heroines in all walks of life, indeed — though all walks of life do not necessarily lead to goodness. Indeed, there are some which teach that goodness is foolishness — but all won't believe it is true.

The extraordinary wastefulness of foreign life is a fact that strikes one hard after life in the interior. Men work like slaves for no other earthly reason than that conventions require them to live beyond their means; and those who are free to live as they wish live on a scale that seems extravagant in the extreme.

All goes right in the end, but I have not yet

escaped the sensation of imagining one life devouring a hundred for mere amusement. Here is a man who spends, to my knowledge, more than five hundred dollars a week for mere amusement. He lives, therefore, at the rate of more than one thousand Japanese lives. I'm not disputing his right; but in the eternal order of things the whirligig of time must bring in strange revenges. . . .

A paper read by Spencer before the Anthropological Society, on the subject of the Method of Comparative Psychology, came into my hands the other day. It was only four or five pages — so I could read it. What a magnificent teaching for an essay on Japanese psychology! I may try to take up the theme some day. There are some terrible suggestions, however — such as that the Japanese indifference to abstract ideas is not indifference, but incapacity to form general ideas. The language would seem to confirm the suggestion.

P.S. I should like to discuss the "heredity and evolution" topic of child-feeling, but fear to weary you with my scribble. Indeed I wrote a long letter, but concluded not to send to-day. You are quite right about the inherited feeling of the impulse to martial play: the new toy would represent subjectively some slight modifications of inherited pleasure as regards colour, form, and noise — but the inherited feeling remains the chief factor in the matter. A mask of o tafuku as a toy would not effect

modifications in the quality of certain inherited impressions, but only accentuate them, and accentuate others innumerable faintly connected with them.

Ever, with regret that I cannot write more for the moment, yours faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — I might one of these days get a job in Loochoo, when the country becomes richer — and explore ghostology. The ghost-business must be simply immense: it must be immense anywhere that the dead are better housed than the living. Of old I felt sure that if the Egyptian demotic texts were translated, the ghostly side of that literature would be amazing — for just the same reason. Well, they have been translated; and the ghost-stories are without parallel. Assyrian ghostology is also very awful; but we don't know much about their necropoles — for whatever those were, they were of perishable stuff.

As I told the Houghton firm I had a volume of philosophical fairy-tales in mind, and wanted to read Andersen again, they sent me four volumes; ... the old charm comes back with tenfold force, and makes me despair. How great the art of the man! — the immense volume of fancy — the magical simplicity — the astounding force of com-

pression! This is n't mere literary art; it is a soul photographed and phonographed and put, like electricity, in storage. To write like Andersen, one must be Andersen. But the fountain of his inspiration is unexhausted, and I hope to gain by drinking from it. I read, and let the result set up disturbances interiorly. Disturbances emotional I need. I have had no sensations since leaving Kyūshū.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KŌBE, *April*, 1895

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . Apparently the war is over; and we are glad — with due apprehension. Possibilities are ugly. The doom of foreign trade in Japan has, I think, begun to be knelled. In twenty-five years more the foreign merchants will be represented here by agents chiefly. The anti-foreign feeling is strong. I am not sure but it is just. Only — the innocent pay, not the guilty.

As for me, I must confess that I am only happy out of the sight of foreign faces and the hearing of English voices. Not quite happy, though — I am always worried for the future. I drew the lots of the gods: they replied yesterday at Kiyomizu in Holy Kyōto: "All you wish you shall have, but not until you are very old." H'm! Is that Delphic? Can I become very old?

No: Kazuo is not a Japanese rendering of Lafcadio.

It signifies only "First of the Excellent," or "Best of the Peerless Ones," but it does serve for both purposes to the imagination.

As I watch the little fellow playing, all the dim vague sensations of my own childhood seem to come back to me. I comprehend by unexpected retrospection!

My eye is not yet quite well. But I expect it will last for some years more.

Best thanks for that admirable and timely letter of advice. Of course I shall follow it absolutely. Wish I had the advantage of being closer to my loved adviser — for more reasons than one.

L. H.

TO PAGE M. BAKER

KŌBE, *April*, 1895

DEAR PAGE, — I paid thirty-five cents postage the other day on a huge envelope the superscription whereof filled my soul with joy. I know it is mean to mention the thirty-five cents; but I do this on purpose — that I may be properly revenged. Opening the envelope I found a very dear letter, for which I am more than grateful — *and two pieces of pasteboard, for which I am not grateful at all.* The promised photo had never been put into the envelope — only the envelope — only the pasteboards. The two envelopes had never been opened. And the why and the wherefore of the thing I am at a loss to discern. But as you did not stop sending the paper

to Kumamoto for eight months after I had vainly prayed for a change of address, I suppose that you simply forgot in both cases. . . .

About the little Japanese dress. Now the matter of a little girl's dress is much more complicated than I can tell you — if you want the real thing. Do you wish for a winter, spring, summer, or autumn dress? — for these are quite necessary distinctions. Do you wish for a holiday dress? — a ceremonial dress? — an every-day dress? The winter ceremonial dress for a girl of good family is very expensive, for it consists of silk skirt, koshimaki (body underpetticoat), and four or five heavily wadded silk robes one over the other — with obi, etc. The obi is the most costly part of the dress — may run to thirty or even fifty yen: it ought to cost at least twenty. The summer dress is light, and much cheaper. I think you ought to get a suit for about (yen) sixty to seventy. Of course, no suits are ready-made. The dress must be made to order; and even the girdle worked up. To tie the girdle will be difficult — unless a Japanese shows you the method.

If you want only a common cotton suit, which is very, very pretty, it would be quite cheap. But I suppose you want the fashionable dress, and that is as dear as you care to pay. Prices may range up into the hundreds. Boys' dresses — even winter dresses — are not so dear, but my little fellow's ceremonial dress — the overdress alone — cost twenty-seven dollars without counting the adjuncts.

Boys' soft obi cost, however, only three or four yen; and girls' obi five or six times as much. Shoes (sandals) and stockings are cheap. The geta could scarcely be managed by a Western child. The straw sandal (zōri), with velvet thong, is easy and pleasant to wear. I have heard of *silk* tabi, but never saw any, and I think they are worn only by geisha, etc. White cotton tabi are the prettiest; and I have heard that white silk tabi never look really white — so the coloured tabi would be better in silk. But everybody wears the white cotton tabi, and nothing could be prettier than a little foot in this cleft envelope.

The colours of the dress of a girl are much brighter than those of boys' dresses; but they change every additional year of the girl's life. They are covered with designs, generally symbolical — full of meanings, but meaningless to Western eyes. The finest textures used — crape — silk, etc. — shrink and suffer immensely by washing; for such dresses as you would want are not worn every day — nor at school or in play.

You see the subject is really very complex, and requires years to learn much about. Only a native in any case can be relied on for choice, etc. The suits of "Japanese clothes" usually bought by foreigners in Japan, to take home to their friends, are made to order just to sell to foreigners, and are not Japanese at all — no Japanese would wear them. For the man as for the woman the rules of

dress are very strict, and vary precisely according to the age of the wearer.

For a little girl two years old, you would not need a hakama — divided skirt. Such hakama are worn by little school-girls, and are usually sky-blue. They are not, like the men's fashionable hakama, made of Sendai silk. The hakama of a high official may be very expensive.

I think what you want could be got for about forty dollars (American money, including all costs), unless you want a winter dress. It would be very heavy, and likely to make the little one too warm, for this climate is not like that of New Orleans. The chief cost is the obi — the broad stiff heavy silk girdle.

Thanks for the sweet things you said about my little boy. He was born November 16th, '93; — so he is younger than your little angel by four or five months. Mrs. Baker was right. Trust a mother's eye to decide all such problems! And say all the kindest and wisest and prettiest things you can to Mrs. Baker for her kindest message. . . .

LAFCADIO HEARN

P.S. What you wrote about Constance is very beautiful. No man can possibly know what life means, what the world means, what anything means, until he has a child and loves it. And then the whole universe changes — and nothing will ever again seem exactly as it seemed before.

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *May*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — I received your kind lette shortly after returning from Kyōto, where I hav been living in an old samurai yashiki transforme into a hotel.

I am quite sorry your eyes are troubling you; an indeed I should sincerely advise you to get awa from all temptation to reading or writing for som months. Considering how much your translatio of that ballad signified in the matter of persona kindness under such circumstances, I cannot bu feel pain — though you will not be sorry to hea that you made a sketch possible, entitled "A Stree Singer," sent to H. M. & Co. toward the construc tion of a new book now under way.

I have not written you before because feelin under the weather — hungry for sympathy I canno get, and have no reason really to expect. It is onl long after one gets credit as a writer that one win any recognition as a thinker. My critics are carefu to discriminate. One assures me that as a poet am impeccable, and "a great man," but that I mus remember my theories can only be decided by th "serious student." Or in other words that I ar never to be taken seriously. The men taken se riously get ten thousand dollars a year for trying t do what I could do much better. Poor myself mus try to live on "dream-stuff."

TO PAGE M. BAKER

I am sorry you cannot read. But still you are fortunate, because you are able to live without being at the mercy of cads and clerks. That alone is a great happiness. I am pestered with requests to do vulgar work for fools at prices they would not dare to offer, if they did not imagine me an object of charity. Happily I can get away from them all, and keep the door locked.

What a privilege to live in Kyōto. I should be glad of a very small post there. The Exhibition is marvellous — showing how Japan will revenge herself on the West. Artistically it is very disappointing. There are funny things — a naked woman (not a "nude study," but simply a naked woman in oil) for which the artist insolently asks three thousand dollars. It is worth about three rin. The Japanese don't like it, and they are right. But I fear they do not know why they are right.

Ever with best regards

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO PAGE M. BAKER

KŌBE, *May*, 1895

DEAR PAGE, — It was *almost* unkind, after all to have sent the very dear picture, because it brought back too vividly hours of pleasant talk and kind words and great projects and all sorts of things which have forever passed away. But there was a pleasure in the pain too — for it is quite a help in life to feel that ever so far away there is somebody

who loves you, and whom Time will not quickly change. You look just the same. I — I should scare you were I to send you a picture — you would think Time was much faster than he is. For I am very ancient to behold.

Well, love to you for the picture. . . .

Of news little to tell you that you do not get from other sources. Japan has yielded the Liao-tung Peninsula; but the nation is full of sullen anger against Russia and the interference-powers. The press is officially muzzled; but there is no mistaking the popular feeling. Even an overthrow of the existing Government is not impossible, and a return to that military autocracy which is really the natural government of an essentially military race. If the Japanese house of representatives had not interfered seriously and idiotically with naval expansion, Russian interference would have been almost impossible.

I was on the Matsushima yesterday, the flagship. She has few scars outside; but she must have been half torn to pieces inside. Her decks were covered only a few months back with blood and brains. She is only 4280 tons; and she had to fight with two 7400 ton battle-ships and European gunners. She lost half her crew, but won gloriously. (The Japanese really never lost one ship — only a torpedo-boat that got run aground.) The people are proud of her with good reason; and the officers let them come with their babies to look at the decks

where stains still tell of the sacrifices for Japan's sake.

Ever faithfully and affectionately
LAFCADIO HEARN

TO PAGE M. BAKER

KŌBE, *July*, 1895

DEAR PAGE, — Your kindest letter has come. Of course my mention of the postage-payment was only playful spite; for I should be glad to get letters from you upon those conditions. The Japanese Post-Office people don't seem to do things after our fashion just now, since discharging all their foreign employés. The new clerks get about ten dollars a month (four dollars and a half American money), and most of them are married on that!

No: I do not see the newspapers. The clubs have them; but I take infinite care to avoid the vicinity of clubs. Sometimes a friend sends me a paper (the "Herald," for example); and the publishers sent me only a few notices this time — about three, I think. That "Herald" I saw, through kindness of a man whom I don't even know.

I don't know that you are wrong about not ordering the dress just now. The taller the little Constance gets, the better she will look in one. I fancy that the summer dress will be best — it shows the figure a little: the winter dress, for a cold day, makes one look a little bit roly-poly. Perhaps a little school-girl's dress would please you; — though

it is not very dear, but rather very cheap, it is pretty — quite pretty and of many colours. The Japanese robes bought in Japan by foreign ladies are especially made for them; — they are not the real thing. No pretty grown-up American girl would feel comfortable in the Japanese girdle, which is not tied round the waist, but round the hips — so that Japanese women, well dressed, look shorter-limbed than they really are, and they are short of limb compared with the women of Northern races. Much stuff has been written, however, about the short-legged Japanese. I have seen as well-limbed men as one could care to see: — they are shorter of stature than Northern Europeans or Americans, but they would make a very good comparison with French, Spanish, or Italians — the dark types. They are heavily built, too, sometimes. The Kumamoto troops are very sturdy; and the weight of the men surprised me. But the finest men, except labourers, that I have seen in Japan are the men-of-war's-men — the bluejackets. They are picked from the sturdiest fishing population of Southern Japan, where the men grow big, and I have seen several over six feet.

But I have been digressing. It was very sweet — your little picture of home life with the darling fillette. She is much more advanced than my boy. He is younger, of course; but girls mature intellectually so much quicker than boys. He is puzzled, too, by having to learn two languages — each

totally different in thought construction; but he knows, when the postman gives him a letter, which language it is written in. I think, though it is not for me to say it, that the whole street loves him; — for everybody brings him presents and pets him. At first he worried me a little by calling out to every foreigner — some rough ones into the bargain — "Hei, papa!" But the old sea-captains and the mercantile folk thus addressed would take him up in their arms and pet him; and there is a big captain with a red face who watches for him regularly, to give him candies, etc. We are going soon to another house; and we shall miss the good kind captain.

I'm still out of work, and going to stay out of it. I think I can live by my pen. I am not sure, of course; but I can hang out here a couple of years more, anyhow — and trust to luck. My publishers seem to be all right.

Infinite thanks about the syndicate project. I can certainly undertake the matter for the figure named — for I won't be away more than six months. I have written my publishers to ask if I can get certain proofs of a new book (not quite finished yet — so please don't mention it) early enough to start about October. I should like one provision — that I may choose another point, such as Java, in preference to Manila or Ryūkyū — supposing ugly circumstances, such as cholera, intervene. I might try a French colony — Tonkin, Noumea, or Pondicherry. At all events this would not hurt the syndi-

cate's interests. I should hope to be back in spring; and I would not disappoint you as to quality. Perhaps the more queer places I go to, the better for the syndicate.

I don't know what to tell you about war-matters. The unjust interference of the three powers has to be considered, though, from two points of view. The first is, that the anger of the nation may create such a feeling in the next Diet as to provoke a temporary suspension of the constitution. The second is that most of us feel the check to Japan was rather in the interest of foreign residents. The feeling against foreigners had been very strong, not without reason, as the foreign newspapers, excepting the "Mail" and the "Kōbe Chronicle," had mostly opposed the new treaties, and criticized the war in an unkindly spirit. Besides, there never had been any really good feeling between foreigners and Japanese in the open ports. Now there was really danger that after a roaring triumph, without check, over China, the previous feeling against foreigners would take more violent form. The sympathetic action of England improved the feeling very much; and really I think the check will in the end benefit Japan. She will be obliged to double or triple her naval strength, and wait a generation. In the meantime she will gain much in other power, military and industrial. Then she will be able to tackle Russia — if she feels as she now does. The army and navy were furiously eager to fight Russia. But Russia has

enormous staying power; and the fleets of three nations stood between the 150,000 men abroad and the shores of Japan. Of course it was a risk. England might have settled the naval side of the matter in Japan's favour. But war would have had sad consequences to industry and commerce. The Japanese statesmen were right. Besides, what does Japan lose? — Nothing, except a position; for the retrocession must be heavily paid for. The anger of the people is only a question of national vanity wounded; — and though they would sacrifice everything for war, it is better that they were not suffered by the few wise heads to do so.

I was sorry about your having to slap that fellow. But you will always be the old-style Knight — preferring to give a straight-out blow, than simply to sit down at a desk and score a man every day, unwearyingly, as Northern editors do.

I am glad to hear of Matas. I used to love him very much. . . .'

As to kissing in Japan, there is no kissing. Kissing is not "forbidden" at all; — there is simply no impulse to kiss among the Turanian races. All Aryan races have the impulse, as an affectionate greeting. Children do not kiss their parents; — but the pressing of cheek to cheek is nearly the same thing — as a demonstration. Mothers lip their little ones; — but — how shall I explain? The kiss, as we understand it in the Occident, is considered not as an affectionate, but as a *sexual*

impulse, or as of kin to such an impulse. Now this is absolutely true. Undoubtedly the modern kiss of the cultivated West may have no such meaning in 99,997 cases out of 99,998. But the original primitive signification of pressing lip to lip, as Aryan races do, or even lip to cheek, is physiologically traceable to the love which is too often called l'amour, but which has little to do with the higher sense of affection. With us the impulse of a child to kiss is absolutely *instinctive*. The Japanese child has no such impulse whatever; but his way of caressing is none the less delicious.

On the other hand, it is significant that the Japanese word for "dear," "lovable" is also used to signify "sweetness" of the material saccharine kind. But perhaps this is offset by the fact that Japanese confectionery, though delicious, never nauseates through over-sweetness; and that the quantity of sugar used is very much less than with us. One never gets tired of kwashi; but plumcake and bonbons in the West need to be sparingly used. Perhaps we want too much sweetness of all kinds. The Japanese are in all things essentially temperate and self-restrained — as a people. Of course, Western notions and examples begin to spoil them a little.

It is possible by the time this reaches you that I shall have become a Japanese citizen — for legal reasons. (Say nothing yet about it.) If I marry my wife before the consul, then she becomes English,

and loses the right to hold property in her own country. Marrying her by Japanese custom will not be acknowledged as legal, without special permission of the minister of foreign affairs — but if I get the permission, then she becomes English, and the *boy* too. So my marriage, though legal according to every moral code, and according to the old law, becomes illegal by new law, and the wife and family — as I really follow the Japanese code, supporting father, mother, and grandparents — have no rights except through a will, which relatives can dispute. I therefore cut the puzzle by changing nationality, and becoming a Japanese. Then I lose all chance of Government employ at a living salary; for the Englishman who becomes a Japanese is only paid by the Japanese scale. Also I lose the really powerful protection given to Englishmen by their own nation. Finally I have to pay taxes much bigger than consular fees, and my boy becomes liable to military service. (But that won't hurt him.) I hope in any case to give him a scientific education abroad. The trouble is I am now forty-five. I'll be sleeping in some Buddhist cemetery before I can see him quite independent. . . .

I have lost friends because their wives did n't like me — more than once; — as Chamberlain says, "No: you 'll never be a ladies' man." But the kindly spirit of Mrs. Baker shows even through your own letters; — and if I can ever see you again, I know that, although not a ladies' man, I won't be disliked

in one friend's home as a fugitive visitor. Say everything grateful to her for me that you can.

Good-bye, with love to your pretty gold-head — and regards to all friends.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *July*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — In reading Schopenhauer (I believe you have the splendid Haldane & Kemp version in three volumes: it is said to preserve even the remarkable sonority of the German original), you may notice where Schopenhauer failed, only through want of knowledge undeveloped in his time. While highly appreciating Lamarck — the greatest of the evolutionists before Darwin, greater even than Goethe — he finds fault with his theory as not showing proof of the prototype formless animal from which all organic forms existing are derived. Therefore Schopenhauer insisted on the potential prototype existing in the Will only. But since Schopenhauer's day, the material formless prototypal animal has been found; and the theory of Schopenhauer as to forms falls back into a region of pure metaphysics. He is none the less valuable on that account. He represents the soul (psyche) of an enormous fact, or at least a soul which can be fitted to the body of science for the time being. He has been justly called a German Buddhist; and his philosophy is entirely based on the study of

Brahmanic and Buddhist texts. The only absolutely novel theory in his book is the essay on sexual love — vol. 3 in your edition. There is one defect in it, but that does not hurt the value of the whole. And then the splendour of style, of self-assertion, of imagery Huxley equalled only, I think twice, in all of his essays. Of course Schopenhauer belongs to the evolutional school; that is the reason why he has been taken up to-day after long neglect. His work gives new force to evolutional psychology of the new school. The most remarkable popular effect of the newer school has not, I think, yet been noticed. It is in fiction; and the success of a work taken in this line recently has made a fortune for publishers and author. Unfortunately, poor I have not the constructive art necessary to attempt anything of the kind — not yet! Perhaps in twenty years more.

Very faithfully

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

KŌBE, *August*, 1895

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — A delicious surprise — though one that gave some pain; for I suffered to think you should have used your eyes to such an extent for my sake. Mason, too, one day actually wrote me that he would copy something for me if I needed it (which luckily I had got from another source): I should be pained to have either of you try your eyes for my poor vagaries. Please don't think

me too selfish; — it was simply lovable of you, but don't do it again.

I think I may be able to use a fragment or two effectively: what I want now to get is the rhythm used in the singing — and that none of my people can remember. They said it was very wonderful, but very difficult to catch: so that it would seem some melodies are as hard for the Japanese themselves to learn by ear, as they are for us to so learn. I had the same curious experience at Sakai and in Kizuki; yet I asked persons who had been listening to the singing for several hours, and were natives of the place. They all said, "Ah! that is very difficult. So a good ondo tori is hard to find; and they are paid well to come to our festivals." But when the woman comes again I shall try to syllabify the measure on paper.

I can feel the popular mind in the peasant songs: in the military songs I cannot. But there is a queer variation in tone used in military singing which is very effective. The leader suddenly turns down his voice nearly a full octave, and all the chorus follow: it is like a sudden and terrible menace — then all go back to high tenor notes again. What you tell me about Ryūkyū priests' songs surprised me. You must have got everything that could be got there in an astonishingly short time. I sent you the Nara miko-songs — mystical hymns about sowing, etc. — very artless. The Nara and Kompira miko are really virgins. Entre nous I am sorry to say that

the miko of Kizuki are not: but, as they ought to be, there is no use specifying in any public way. It would be like denying the virtue of nuns in general, because one or two sisters fall from grace. While the ideal lives anywhere it strikes me as wrong to insist too much on realism.

I know you make a collection of everything relating to Japan, so I must send you a photo of Yuko Hatakeyama. I had it copied from a badly faded one — so it does not come out well. You are not of those who refuse to see beyond the visible; and though there is nothing beautiful or ideal in this figure, it was certainly the earthly chrysalis of a very precious and beautiful soul, which I have tried to make the West love a little bit. So you may prize it.

Some one, thinking to please me, sent me by this mail a large French periodical, full of gravures porno- or semi-pornographiques, Saint Anthony and French courtesans and angels mixed up together. I burned the thing — astonished at the revulsion of feeling it produced in myself. (The work was beautiful in its way, of course, but the way!) After all, it seems to me that Japanese life is essentially chaste: its ideals are chaste. I can feel now exactly how a Japanese feels about certain foreign tendencies. I know all about Japanese picture-books of a certain class — innocent things in their very frankness: there is more real evil, or at least more moral weakness in any number of certain French public prints. It strikes me also that the charm even of

the jōro to the Japanese mind is quite different from any corresponding Western feeling. She figures simply as an ideal lady of old time, and the graces cultivated in her, and the costume donned, are those of an ideal past. The animalism of half-exposures and suggestions of whole exposures is not any more Japanese than it was old-Persian. Even the naughty picture-books were intended for imitations, catechism.

Talking of catechism, I have been thinking of making a Buddhist catechism of a somewhat fantastic sort.

"How old are you?"

"I am millions of millions of years old, as a phenomenon. As absolute I am eternal and older than the universe," etc.

Faithfully ever

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KŌBE, *September*, 1895

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . I am waiting every day for the sanction of the minister to change my name; and I think it will come soon. This will make me Koizumi Yakumo, or — arranging the personal and family names in English order — "Y. Koizumi." "Eight clouds" is the meaning of "Yakumo," and is the first part of the most ancient poem extant in the Japanese language. (You will find the whole story in "Glimpses" — article "Yaegaki.") Well,

"Yakumo" is a poetical alternative for Izumo, my beloved province, "the Place of the Issuing of Clouds." You will understand how the name was chosen.

If all goes well, and I am not obliged to return to America, I shall next year probably return to Izumo, and make a permanent home there. So long as I can travel in winter, I need not care about the weather. When my boy grows big enough, if I live, I shall take him abroad, and try to give him a purely scientific education — modern languages if possible, no waste of time on Latin, Greek, and stupidities. (Literature and history can be best learned at home; and the greatest men are not the products of schools, not in England or America, at least: Germany is an exception.) He might turn out to be very commonplace, in which case all plans must be changed; but I suspect he will not be stupid. He says, by the way, that he was a doctor in his former birth. It is quite possible, for he has my father's eyes.

In regard to what you asked me about the English literature business, I think there is no way of teaching English literature except by selections — joined together with an evolutional study of English emotional life, illustrated after the manner of Taine's "Art in Italy," etc. But such work, combining history with literature, would involve the use of an immense library, and would be very costly to the teacher. By the way, I *hate* English literature.

French literature is much more interesting. What I should most like would be to make a study of comparative literature — including Sanscrit, Finnish, Arabic, Persian — systematizing the best specimens of each into kindred groupings on the evolutional plan. That *would* be worth doing; for it means a study of the evolutional development of all mankind. But such undertakings, I fear, are for the extremely rich.

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK

KŌBE, *Autumn*, 1895

DEAR HENDRICK, — . . . It has often occurred to me to ask whether you think other men feel as I do about some things — you yourself, for example. Work with me is a pain — no pleasure till it is done. It is not voluntary; it is not agreeable. It is forced by necessity. The necessity is a curious one. The mind, in my case, eats itself when unemployed. Reading, you might suggest, would employ it. No: my thoughts wander, and the gnawing goes on just the same. What kind of gnawing? Vexation and anger and imaginings and recollections of unpleasant things said or done. *Unless somebody does or says something horribly mean to me, I can't do certain kinds of work* — the tiresome kinds, that compel a great deal of thinking. The exact force of a hurt I can measure at the time of receiving it: "This will be over in six months"; "This I shall have to fight for

two years"; "This will be remembered longer." When I begin to think about the matter afterwards, then I rush to work. I write page after page of vagaries, metaphysical, emotional, romantic — throw them aside. Then next day, I go to work rewriting them. I rewrite and rewrite them till they begin to define and arrange themselves into a whole — and the result is an essay; and the editor of the "Atlantic" writes, "It is a veritable illumination" — and no mortal man knows why, or how it was written — not even I myself — or what it cost to write it. Pain is therefore to me of exceeding value betimes; and everybody who does me a wrong indirectly does me a right. I wonder if anybody else works on this plan. The benefit of it is that a *habit* is forming — a habit of studying and thinking in a way I should otherwise have been too lazy-minded to do. But whenever I begin to forget one burn, new caustic from some unexpected quarter is poured into my brain: then the new pain forces other work. It strikes me as being possibly a peculiar morbid condition. If it is, I trust that some day the power will come to do something really extraordinary — I mean very unique. What is the good of having a morbid sensitive spot, if it cannot be utilized to some purpose worth achieving?

There was a funny suicide here the other day. A boy of seventeen threw himself on the railroad track and was cut to pieces by a train. He left a letter to his employer, saying that the death of the

employer's little son had made the world dark for him. The child would have nobody to play with: so, he said, "I shall go to play with him. But I have a little sister of six; — I pray you to take care of her."

Ever affectionately

LAFCADIO HEARN

TO BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN

September, 1895

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN, — Your paper on Luchu gave me more pleasure, I am sure, than it even did to the president of the society before whom it was read; and I was delighted with the nice things said of you. Of course this paper — being a much more elaborate monograph than the other — differs from its predecessor in the matter of suggestiveness. To me it is like a graded anthropological map — shading off the direction of character-tendencies, language, customs, to the uttermost limit of the subject. I had no idea how much you had been doing in the Archipelago — your own field of research by unquestionable right. If I ever go down there I shall certainly attempt nothing out of the much humbler line which I can follow: there is really nothing left for another man to do in the way of gathering general knowledge about an unfamiliar region.

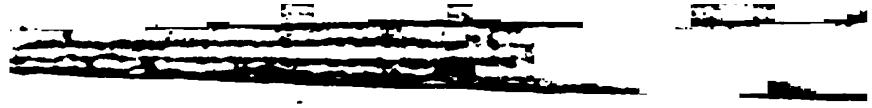
There is one expression of opinion in the monograph which I may venture a remark about. The

idea is growing upon me, more and more each day I live, that the supposed indifferentism of the Japanese in religious matters is affected indifferentism — that it is put on like yofuku, only for foreigners. I see too much of the real life, even here in Kōbe, to think the indifferentism real. And I believe the Jesuits, who are better judges far than our comfortable modern proselytizers, never accused the Japanese of indifference. However, this is but suggestive: I think that should you ever find time to watch the incidents of common life minutely, you will recognize the Jesuits as the keenest observers. As for the educated classes, I have also reason to know that in most cases the indifference is feigned. This will show you how my own opinions have changed in five years' time.

Very truly yours

LAFCADIO HEARN

END OF VOLUME XIV



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